

I WILL DO MY WORST



ANAR  
CHIK

THE WORK OF ROBERTO AMBROSOLI





I WILL DO MY WORST

# ANAR CHIK

THE WORK OF ROBERTO AMBROSOLI



World Turned Upside Down Press  
© everything for everyone  
2024



“I will do my worst, said the anarchist disappearing into the darkness”  
-unknown

First Edition

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*From Paolo Finzi's introduction to Farò Del Mio Peggio*

The comics, illustrations, and posters in this book have been gathered from three primary sources: The book *Anarchik. Farò del Mio Peggio. Cronache Anarchiche a Fumetti* (*Anarchik. I'll do my Worst. Chronicles of an Anarchist Comic*), the archives of *A-Rivista Anarchica*, and the Centro Studi Libertari/ Archivio G. Pinelli. We have done our best to preserve the gorgeous weight of line that Roberto executed in his illustrative work and his obvious deep humor and passion in our translations.

Anarchik has no copyright; he can't. Roberto Ambrosoli, generously, didn't want it. And this little character, strictly clad in black, has spread throughout the world, self-directed, varied, and transformed into thousands of other versions. The one "generated" by Roberto (and also by Amedeo) remains original in Italy, but there are countless "enemies of the state" similar to the original. This book\* deals only with the "official" one, reporting a good part of the public releases. It does not discredit the others; in the anarchist field, there is room for everyone.

We are a bit strange, perhaps, we anarchists, and Anarchik, like our historic campaign, is no exception. But it is always a strangeness that has to do with liberation, with irreverence, with the unmasking of hypocrisies and injustices. In this direction, believe me, we try to do our best.

\*referring to *Farò del Mio Peggio*

NEITHER TO SERVE



NOR TO RULE

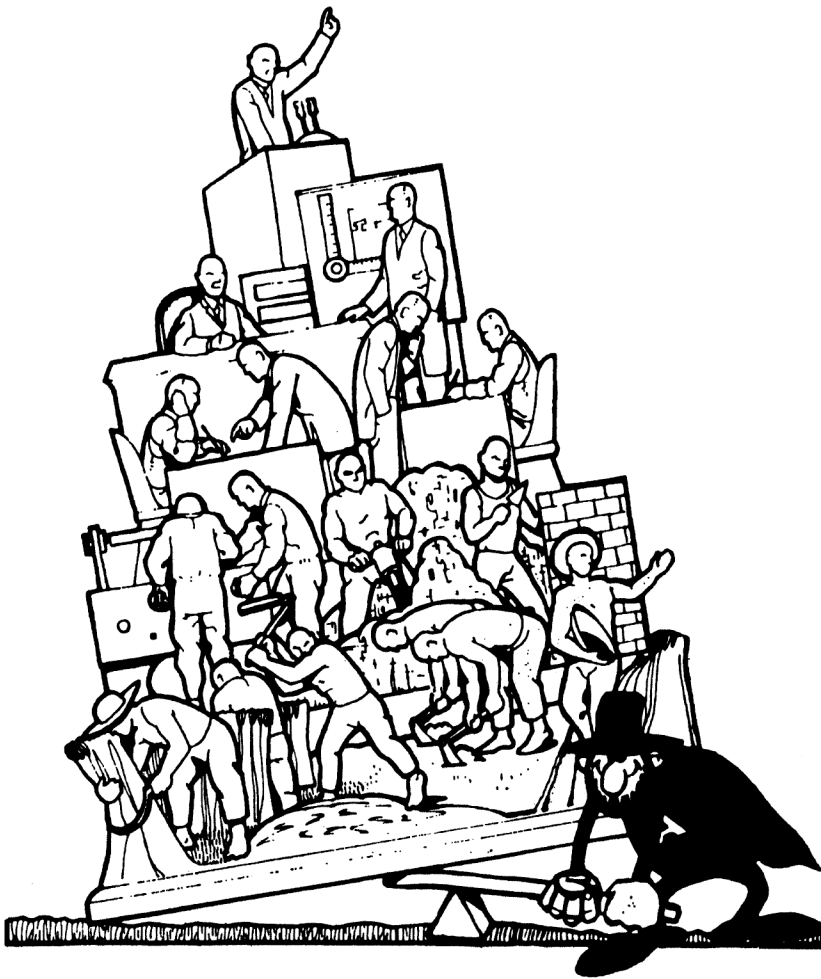


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# Introduction



The Anarchik has always peeked into the corners of my life. I would find him on the walls of punk houses and flipping through zines. I'm pressed at this point to even think of the first time I met him, he's like a distant family friend who has known you since before you could speak. I knew him before I knew where he was from, before I knew the names Roberto or Amedeo. Before I knew about the kidnapping of the Spanish Vice-Consul or the murder of Pinelli.

But from the beginning I knew him as an anarchist, both a play on the worst of our stereotypes and a representation of the best of our aspirations and possibilities. He was the bomb throwing criminal who still haunts the minds of conservatives, liberals, and state communists, but through his irreverent smile he was also the punks I knew who cooked Food Not Bombs slop, broke a Starbucks window, and scammed Kinkos copies. He is part of an unruly history that has included a fair amount of bomb throwing, counterfeiting, assassinations, thefts, and the occasional grave robbing. The Anarchik reminds us of our feisty legacy and also that no matter what we do our detractors will call it violence too.

As with most projects where you pull on the black thread of anarchist history, the slightest tug leads into a rich fabric of friends, enemies, tragedies, and successes across multiple generations. We have tried to include and explain the friends and events the Anarchik was surrounded by for an English speaking audience who may not be as familiar with them.

— Weaver



## A note on the Years of Lead

Readers who are unfamiliar with the intense political events that occurred during Italy's Years of Lead may find themselves confused by some of the references that Roberto Ambrosoli makes in his writing and work.

While this book does not seek to be a source from which to learn the entirety of the context of those events through which many anarchists lived and died, it does hope to offer a slight glimpse into the tragic events and political context during those times in which anarchists found themselves.

The Years of Lead refer to a twenty-year period of intense political violence following the uprisings of '68 where

fascist groups and state intelligence agencies collaborated (historically known but never proven at a "judicial" level) to carry out bombings, kidnappings, arson, and murders.

This was part of a "strategy of tension" in which the violence could be blamed on anarchists and left-wing workers' organizations to intensify repression and target political enemies. This period comprised thousands of terror attacks and roughly 1,200 lost lives. Some of its first victims were the anarchists of Milan.

On December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1969, a bomb set by fascists exploded in the Piazza Fontana killing 16 and causing dozens and dozens of injuries. In Rome, three more exploded but

caused only injuries. The subsequent media outcry and investigation focused solely on anarchists.

Over 100 anarchists, including the secretary of the recently formed Croce Nera (Black Cross) Giuseppe Pinelli, were taken in for "questioning." On December 15<sup>th</sup> during an "interrogation," Pinelli was murdered, thrown from the fourth-story window of the Milan Police Station, while another anarchist, Pietro Valpreda, was charged for the bombing.

A number of other anarchists were charged with various offenses related to the massacre. The slogan "Valpreda is innocent, Pinelli was murdered, this is a State massacre" resounded with the outrage of an

ever-growing protest movement.

As fascist violence propagated and repression intensified, anarchists saw the necessity for their own media and counter-information sources. Such is the context in which publications like *A-Rivista Anarchica* and the *Anarchik* came into being, as well as the decision that Roberto alludes to in his history of the *Anarchik*, for the little man in black to put away his bomb until a better time.





# ROBERTO AMBROSOLI

## ON THE CREATION OF THE ANARCHIK

The Anarchik is perhaps the first attempt to give anarchist propaganda a less self-important and serious tone from its “classical period,” at least from the post-war time onward.

The mother of the Anarchik is certain. Anarchy. His father, less so.

In addition to his official parent, the author of this article and his illustrator, my dear, brotherly companion Amedeo Bertolo, and many other frequenters of my house and life have to be taken into account, too. With a fair amount of irreverence to the mother, one could quip that the Anarchik was conceived in a situation of free love.

This is his story, based largely on memory and little on documents, so some of the details will be a little uncertain. For the aforementioned reasons, as as well as for the sake of privacy,



Anarchik's exact date of conception remains a mystery, but it can be placed more or less, at the time of the brochure *Who Are the Anarchists* produced in 1966 by the Gioventù Libertaria Group of Milan. Here he appeared to accompany the text of the pamphlet with all the features that defined his character: a wide-brimmed hat and large cloak, all as uniformly black as his ambiguous outfit underneath.

The style of drawing derived itself from comics, cartoonish and bare in line, high contrast, a little “American” even, but still natural and flowing in the draping of the cloak, the wrinkled trouser, and the shoes stretched by oversized feet.

The approach was caricatural, a parody of the anarchist stereotype of the reactionary boor: under the hat a large nose protrudes and a badly groomed beard bursts from his face as he looks at the reader with a knowing smile, extracting from his partially opened cloak the anarchist stereotype's favored typical gadget, the bomb. This is a “classic” and old-fashioned spherical bomb, black of course, complete with an already burning fuse and its accompanying wisp of smoke conveying imminent danger.

This antecedent to the Anarchik developed for about a year, certain in

design but with his personal identity still somewhat unknown. His first official public appearance, identifiable by both name and finalized design, is seen in the first and only issue of the publication *Il Nemico dello Stato* (*The Enemy of the State*) in 1967 in a four-panel design. After a rapid-fire assessment of the moment in which he found himself and the need for anarchist intervention, he ends with the declaration, “I will do my worst!”

This Anarchik is the same as his antecedent from *Who are the Anarchists* (hat, cloak, big nose, scraggly beard), but he's been simplified into a more cartoon-style character wearing tight black leggings which, together with the final K in his name, provide an ironic allusion to certain popular villains (Diabolik, Satanik...) in comics at the time.

In contrast to these, the Anarchik has a derisive and chattering attitude, highlighted by the toothy grin plastered across his face replacing his original, suggestive smile, a sure sign that he has evolved not just morphologically but psychologically as well. After his debut in *The Enemy of the State*, he lived a precarious life in '68 and '69 through fliers, pamphlets, and screen-printed posters, landing in 1971 on the pages of *A-Rivista Anarchica*. There he had a relatively stable presence and served his illustrator's intention to provide a “libertarian humor.”

The layout evolved, growing from the single strip to the nine-panel



model (three rows of three) and the stories became more dynamic with the appearance of one of his many “antagonist-victims.” such as the priest, both decadent and a little pathetic, who flees with his cassock raised from the threat of the Anarchik's bomb, which always hits its mark and explodes, but only with modest and reversible effects, allowing the scene to play out periodically.

Anarchik's bomb is a symbolic and humanitarian bomb that provides its illustrator (and hopefully the reader) with the pleasure of representing the smoked and burnt priest, his lace underwear protruding from a tattered tunic, while the little man in black runs away emitting his ramshackle cackle (Hee! Hee! Hee!) The carefree period of the comic ended soon.

May 1968. The State's massacres

and everything that followed required a more conscious attitude, and ours dedicated itself to commenting on what we found to be important and underlying in the current and unfolding events. The Anarchik wakes from a nightmare in which some of the revolutionary leaders reveal their true authoritarian intentions (an allusion to certain Marxist-Leninist strains of the students' and workers' struggles), or he presents himself for police interrogation with a medical note citing a diagnosis which necessitates the windows being shut (an allusion to Pinelli's flight from the window of the Milan Police Station).

This was the most intense period of the Anarchik's life, during which the increased political tensions determined his spherical bomb's disappearance, or seeming disappearance, if you prefer, while he waited for better times. At a time marked by the recurring presence of other bombs, non-anarchist and absolutely non-humanitarian, the use of such an instrument for humorous and recreational purpose felt inappropriate. Instead, the presence of the little man in black outside of comic strips increased as he accompanied the text of articles, leaflets, and posters, becoming a sort of logo of the militant milieu frequented by his, more or less, official parents, and replaced, occasionally, by other tendencies within the anarchist movement, even outside of Italy.

As a consequence, some "fakes" also appeared which his illustrator likes to meticulously point out, in private, the differences from the original, while benevolently recognizing the good intentions (graphic and political) of the bootleggers.

As time passed, Anarchik abandoned his "active" life and transformed into a symbol (they say it happens to all heroes), which was also due (let's just recognize it) to the decline in the creative inspiration of his parents who were distracted and overwhelmed by other tasks, changing times, and personal events.

The designer, above all, felt his hand starting to slack and his production decrease, which increasingly limited his range of expression with the Anarchik. The Anarchik increasingly became drawn in two styles, for aesthetic rather than ideological reasons, the first with his cloak open and fluttering backward and the second muffled, his cloak fluttering but enveloping his person.

In the first case, his iconic smile is still visible, and his hands are free to hold objects so that the image can be adapted to different situations in which the presenter still wants to convey some sympathetic identification. The second, the face is partially covered and grimmer, used generally to express hostility to potential enemies.

These are now the "classic" images of the Anarchik, the ones that have challenged the adversaries of our era and the enemies of anarchism,

transmitting an implicit, vague, but unequivocal message of libertarian subversion to this day.

These images are saved thanks to the work of those who, unlike this foolish designer, knew how to preserve them.

*"...There is not one Devil,  
but many, which several  
Gospel passages indicate to us.  
...Our struggle...is  
against the rulers of  
darkness and against  
the evil spirits of the air..."*

*(from a rant of Mr. Montini,  
also known as "the pope")*



# CHI SONO GLI ANARCHICI?



Nessuna dottrina sociale è stata, forse, tanto calunniata, fraintesa, sottovalutata, odiata, ignorata, disprezzata quanto quella anarchica. Attorno a nessun movimento politico, forse, si è formata una tale congiura del silenzio (rotta solo, quasi da menzogne diffamatorie e fantastiche) come sull'anarchismo. Eppure gli anarchici hanno avuto ruoli di primo piano nella Prima Internazionale, nella nascita del socialismo in Italia, nella Rivoluzione Russa, nella Rivoluzione Spagnola...

# WHO ARE THE ANARCHISTS?

No social doctrine has been so slandered, misunderstood, undervalued, hated, ignored, and despised as that of anarchism. Around no political movement has there been such a conspiracy of silence (broken only by slanderous and fantastic lies) as about anarchism. Yet anarchists played leading roles in the First International, in the birth of socialism in Italy, in the Russian Revolution, in the Spanish Revolution....

There are two main opinions answering the question "Who are the anarchists?" One is that they are dangerous madmen, bomb-throwers, and creators of chaos. The other, diametrically opposed to the first, wants anarchists to be dreamers, poets who fantasize about a delightful but impossible libertarian society.

Are they "the ones with the bombs?" Are they violent? After Hiroshima; after two world wars; after Vietnam; after millions of bombs that killed millions of men, women, children; after Stalinism and fascism..., isn't it ridiculous to think of anarchists in these terms? It would be more logical to use these terms for the rulers, the politicians, the career military....

Some anarchists, mostly in periods marked by particularly reactionary violence, gave a vigorous voice to justice of the people, and we young anarchists are proud of them today. We deny that, using just a minimum of logical coherence, we can therefore define anarchists as violent. Those who respond to violence with violence, act in self-defense. When counting quantitatively, the violent acts of anarchists disappear, like a drop of water in the ocean of violence committed by governments against them and against the people.

*Full text can be found at <https://stragedistato.files.wordpress.com>*





Zwille  
Germany  
Gerhard Seyfried



INTERNATIONAL

SIBLINGS



Scotland



Spain



Holland



UK Black Flag  
Philip Ruff



# venezia 1984



Incontro Internazionale Anarchico/Venezia 1984— International Anarchist Gathering/Venice 1984 was organized by the anarchist group Centre Studi Libertari (CSL) di Milano with the collaboration of Centre International de Recherches sur l'Anarchisme (CIRA) of Geneva, Switzerland, and the Anarchist Institute of Montreal, Canada. After more than one year of preparation, the Incontro took place on September 24-30, 1984. The event has been extensively chronicled and more can be found at <https://centrostudilibertari.it/>





# THE COMIC

*A-Rivista Anarchica*, also known as *A*, was an Italian anarchist magazine founded in 1971 and published regularly nine times a year until the death of one of its primary founders and editors, Paolo Finzi, in October 2020. Created in Milan by the Ponte della Ghisolfa Anarchist Club as a voice and perspective for anarchists after the Piazza Fontana Massacre and the murder of Giuseppe Pinelli, the *Anarchik* ran in its pages for two non-consecutive decades, starting in 1971 and ending in 2019, with Paolo sometimes making an appearance as “the director.” An archive that includes many articles from Roberto Ambrosoli under his pen name R. Brosio, as well as articles by his brotherly companion Amedeo Bertolo, can be found at <https://www.arivista.org/>



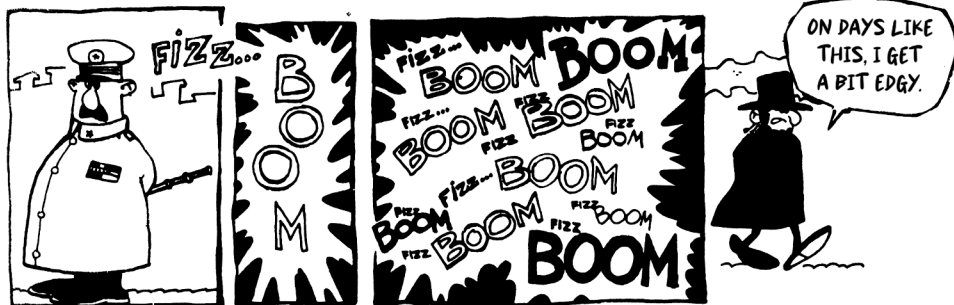
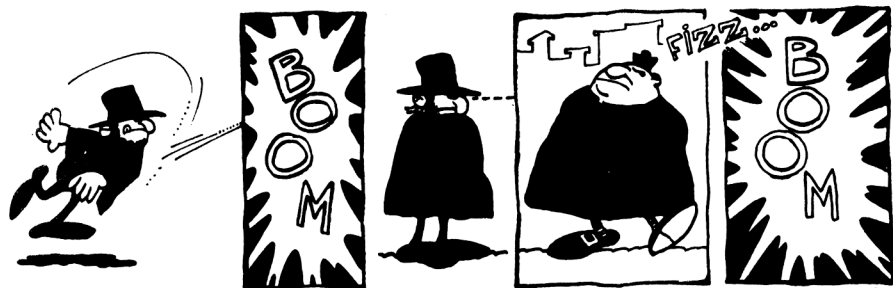
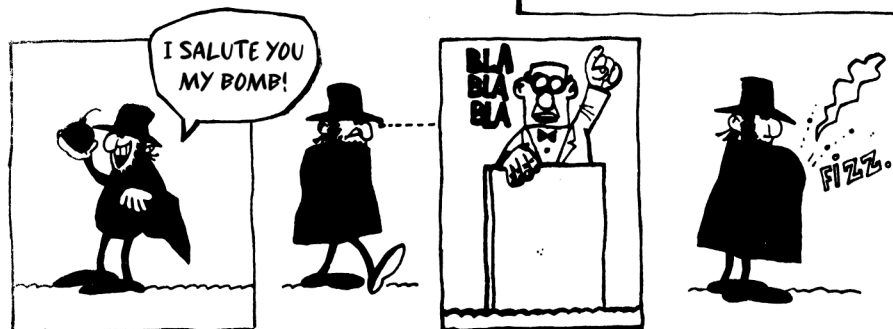
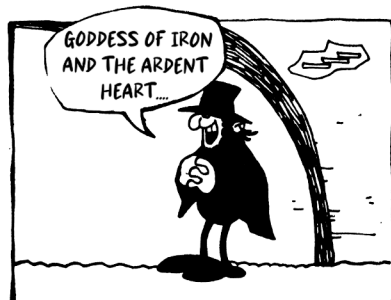
IN THE MAGAZINE



*An homage to the Anarchik that appeared on the cover of A in 1971 as he found his home in a comic strip.*

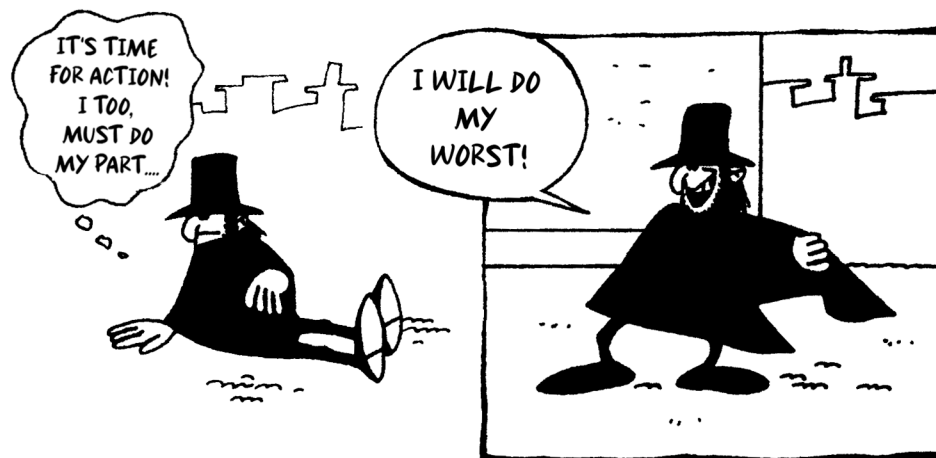
# ANARCHICK

The Enemy of  
the State



from the single issue of Il Nemico Dello Stato published 1967

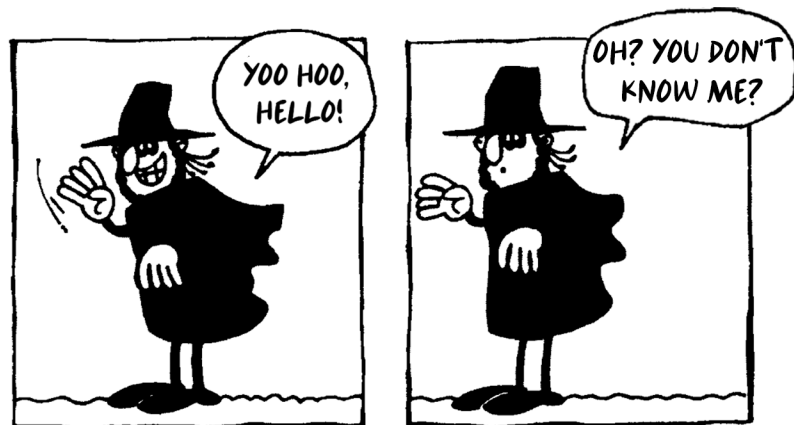
## IT'S TIME FOR ACTION



FEBRUARY 1971



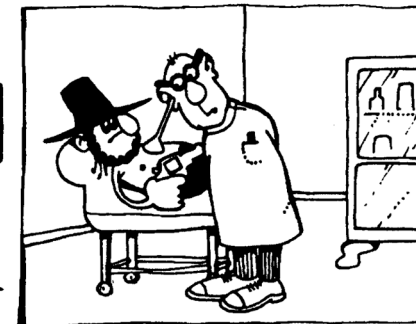
# ENEMY OF THE STATE



AN ENEMY  
OF THE STATE

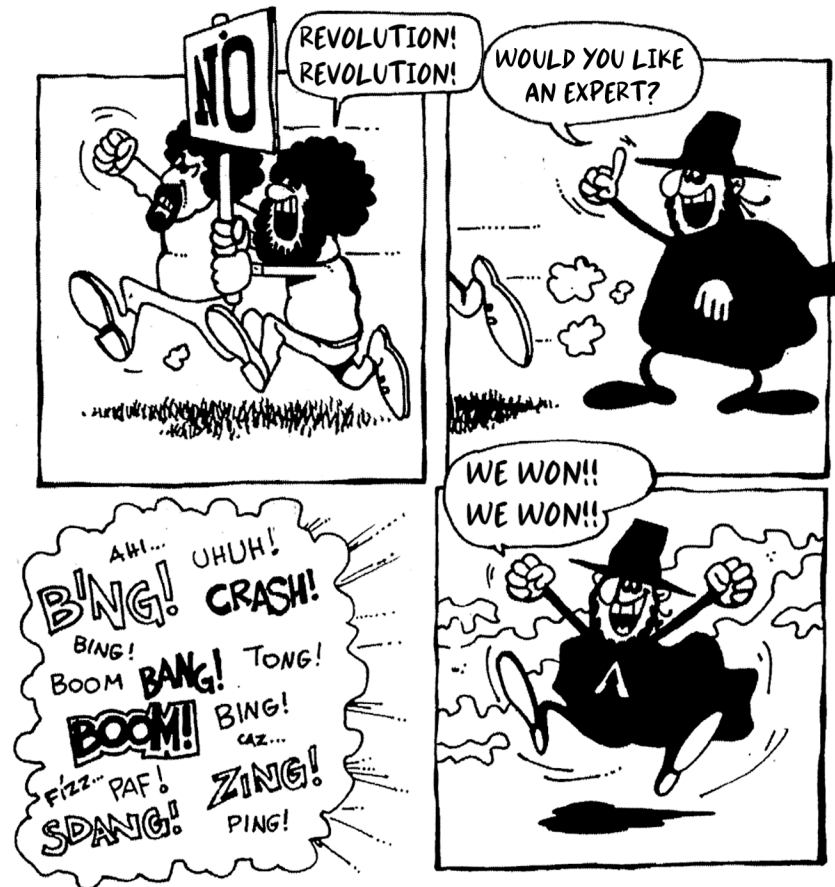
FEBUARY 1971

# ENEMY OF THE STATE



FEBUARY 1971

## AFTER THE REVOLUTION



MARCH 1971

## AFTER THE REVOLUTION



MARCH 1971

# CHARITY



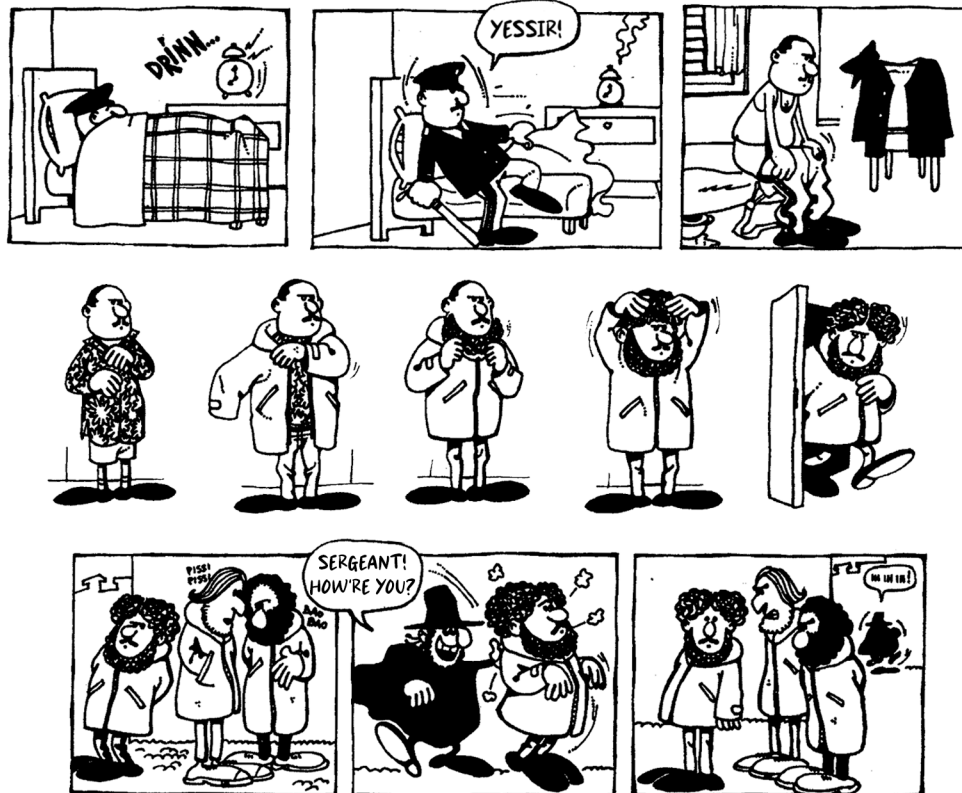
APRIL 1971

# CHARITY



APRIL 1971

## THE SEARGENT



JUNE 1971

## RAIDING THE CAMP



SUMMER 1972

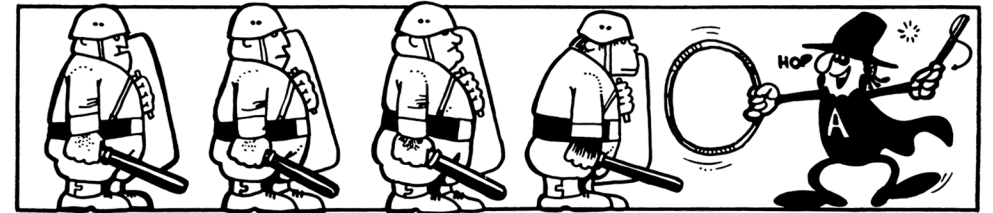


# THE ANARCHIK'S CALENDER

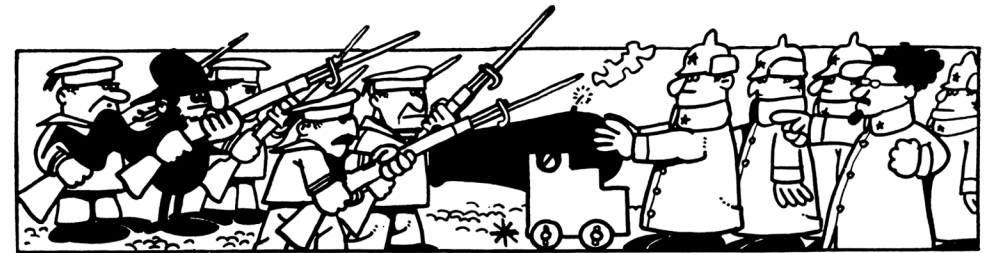
# 1973



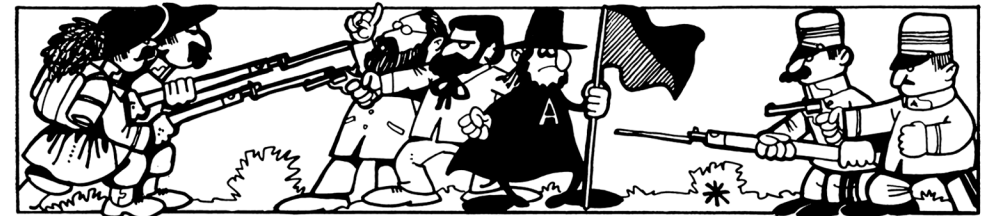
January



February



March, 1921. Kronstadt sailors' uprising

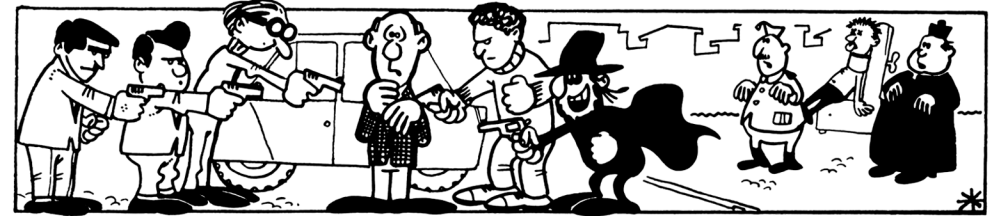


April, 1877. The Matese "gang"

*In 1973 A-Rivista Anarchica released two six month installments of a calender.  
Dates were filled by Roberto highlighting significant moments in history.  
The following are the illustrated headers for each month.*



May, 1968. Barricades in the Latin Quarter in Paris



September, 1962. In protest against Franco, some anarchists kidnap the Spanish Vice-consul in Milan



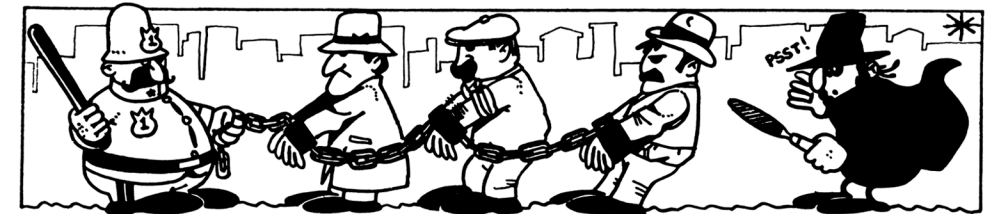
June, 1905. Mutiny on the battleship Potemkin



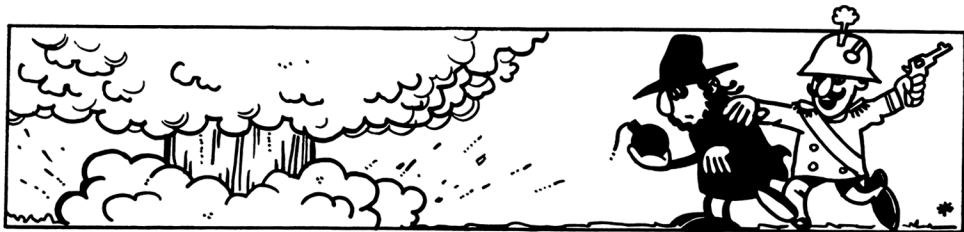
October, 1889. Nestor Makhno is born



July, 1900. Gaetano Bresci executes Umberto I in Monza



November, 1917. Mass arrests of anarchists in Seattle



August, 1945. The United States attacks Hiroshima with an atomic bomb



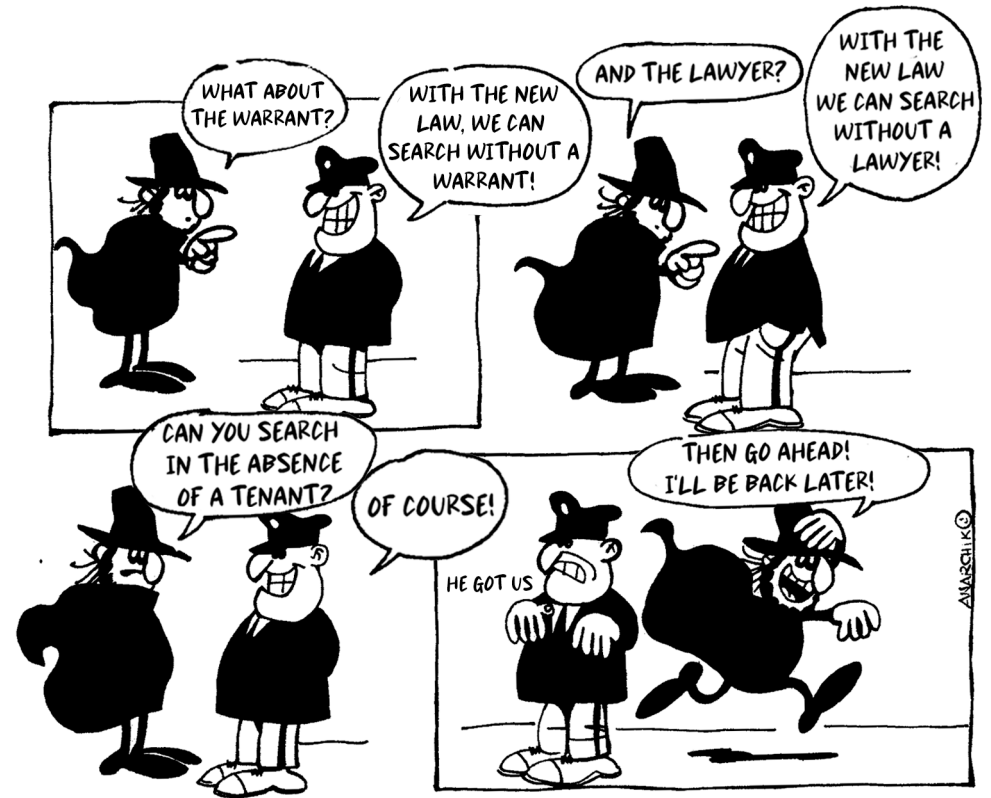
December. A christian religious holiday

## SEARCH AND RAID



MAY 1979

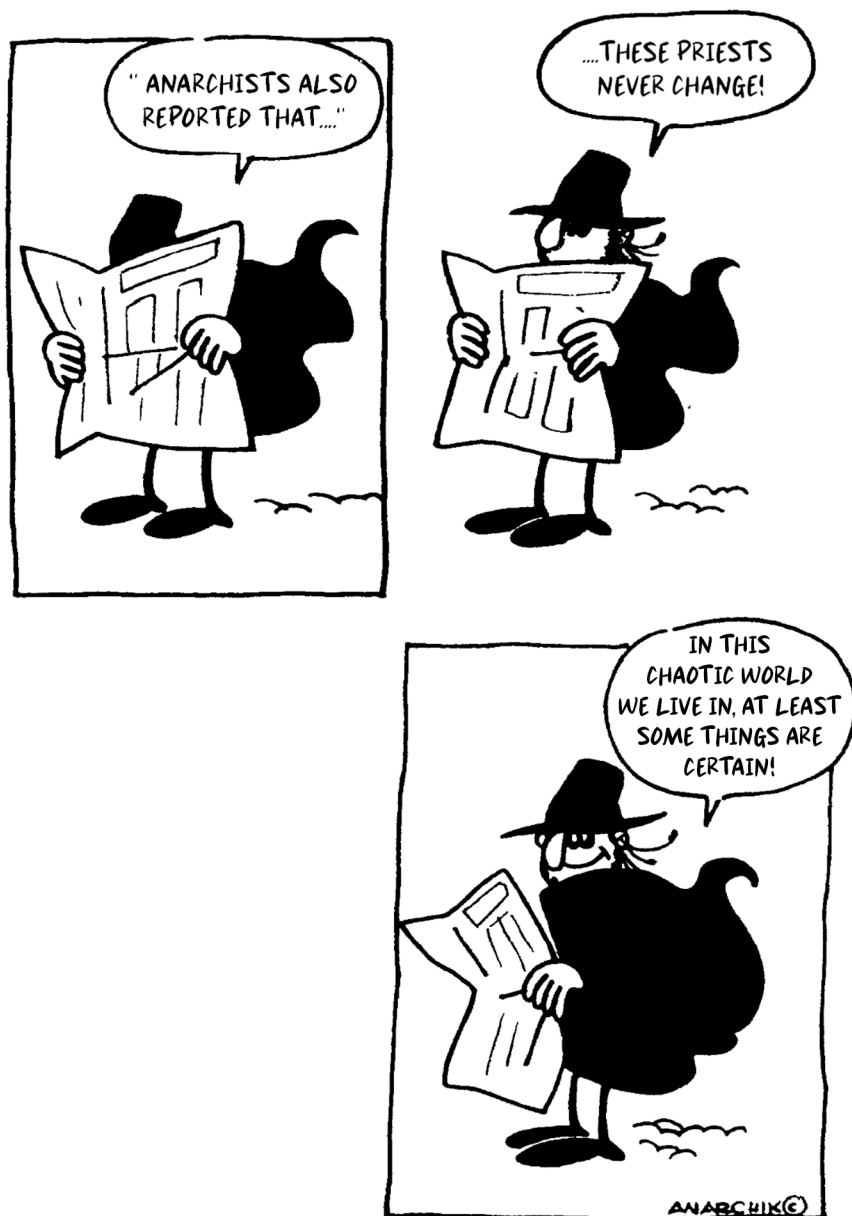
## SEARCH AND RAID



MAY 1979



## SOMETHINGS ARE CERTAIN



APRIL 1981

# A THIRTY YEAR PAUSE

From here the Anarchik takes a break from his comic form while still appearing on flyers, shirts, banners at conferences, and various other pieces of anarchist media. This break lasts until Paolo Finzi asks, as if it has already decided, when the comic strip will be re-appearing. Roberto found himself in a period of inactivity and was excited by the prospect of continuing, and so the Anarchik came back.

As Roberto says, a little older, a little fatter, now with a beard turned white but his clothing still uniformly black.

"However, I was worried about my hand, because I hadn't drawn for a long time - not Anarchik or anything else. And if you look at the first strip of the return, you notice the difficulty of those who pick up the marker again after a long time. The beautiful clean line of the past is no longer there, even if it has improved in subsequent years."

Despite Roberto's concerns, the Anarchik appeared in greater frequency than his previous run. He also returned with a companion who the editorial team of *A-Rivista* referred to as Ambreus.

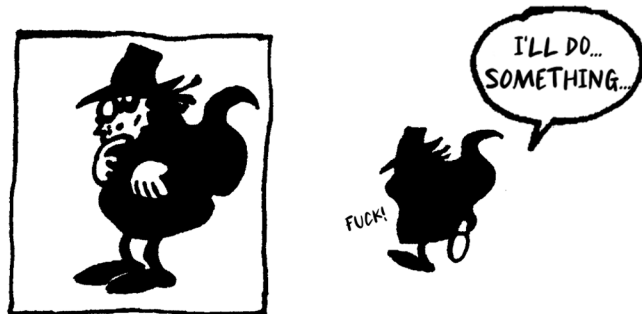
Ambreus often expresses doubts and uncertainties which provide the Anarchik the opportunity for a seditious joke and a friend to find solace in. Someone to walk away

with in brotherly embrace as they struggle with a lack of clear answers to the changing political situation in front of them, but a promise they'll be here for whatever will come next.

"It's me, but at the same time it's not really me. I am both Anarchik and Ambreus. Anarchik is a bit categorical every now and then, and the other guy has some doubts every now and then. They are the two faces - mine - but also in my opinion of the contemporary anarchist movement. They talk to each other, they argue, they go back to the problems, they question each other constantly. Sometimes one supports the other, sometimes the roles are reversed."

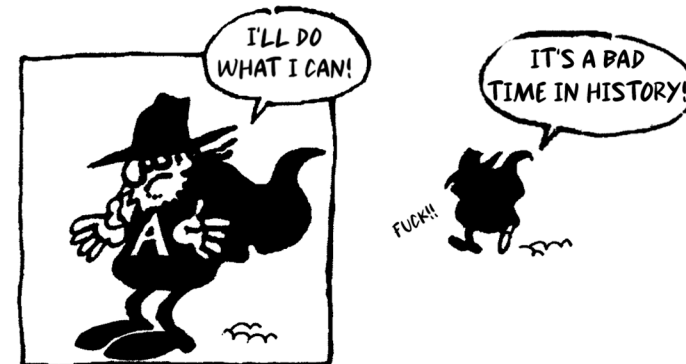


## THE RETURN OF THE ANARCHIK



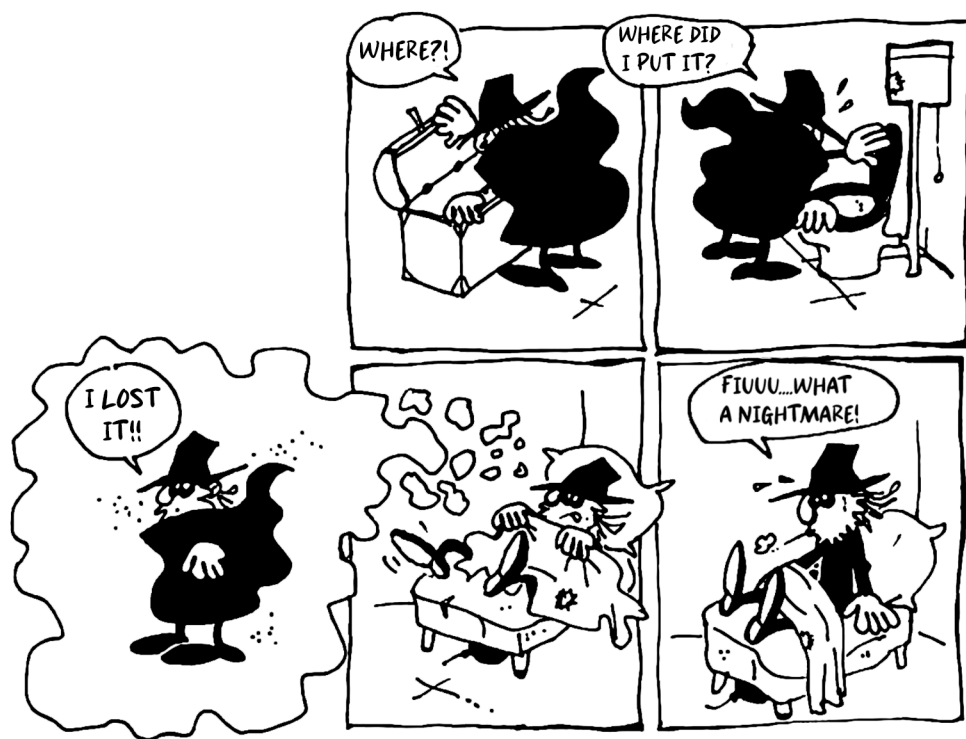
FEBUARY 2011

## THE RETURN OF THE ANARCHIK



FEBUARY 2011

## NIGHTMARE



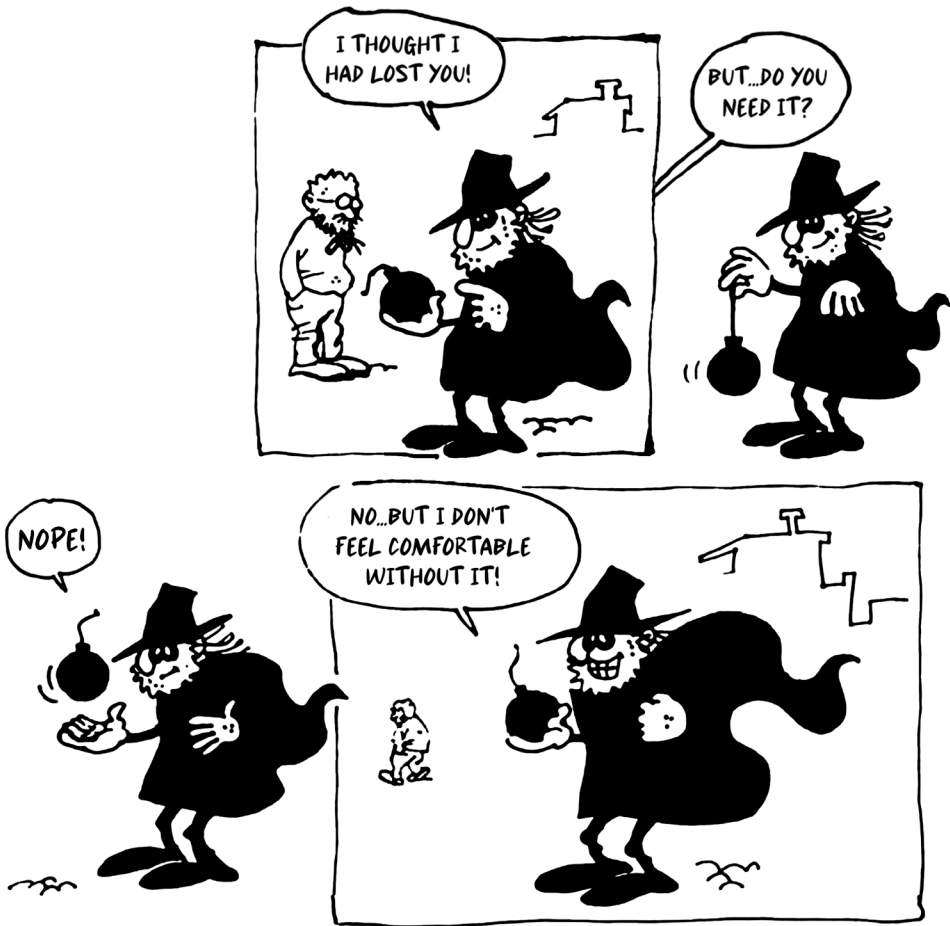
MARCH 2011

## DOUBT



MARCH 2011

Regrettable but  
Some readers did not  
welcome the bomb in  
the Anarchik's hands  
in the last issue.  
here is his response



ACTUALLY MALATESTA

BETWEEN A BULLY WHO  
EXCORIATES AND THREATENS US...  
AND A GATHERING OF COWARDS  
WHO DELIGHT IN THEIR  
ABJECTION...

WE NOTE - AND NOT  
WITHOUT SHAME -WHAT  
KIND OF PEOPLE ARE THOSE  
WHO DOMINATE US

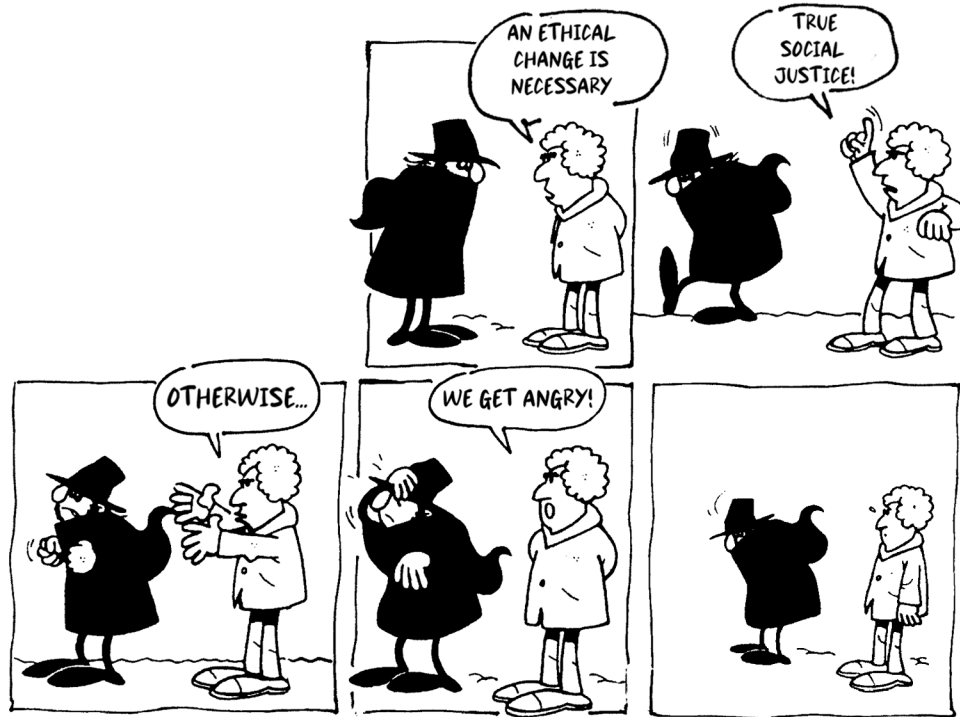


AND WHOSE YOLK  
WE CANNOT ESCAPE!

MALATESTA,  
1922...



## ITALY LIKE SPAIN?



NOVEMBER 2011

## WHAT TO DO?



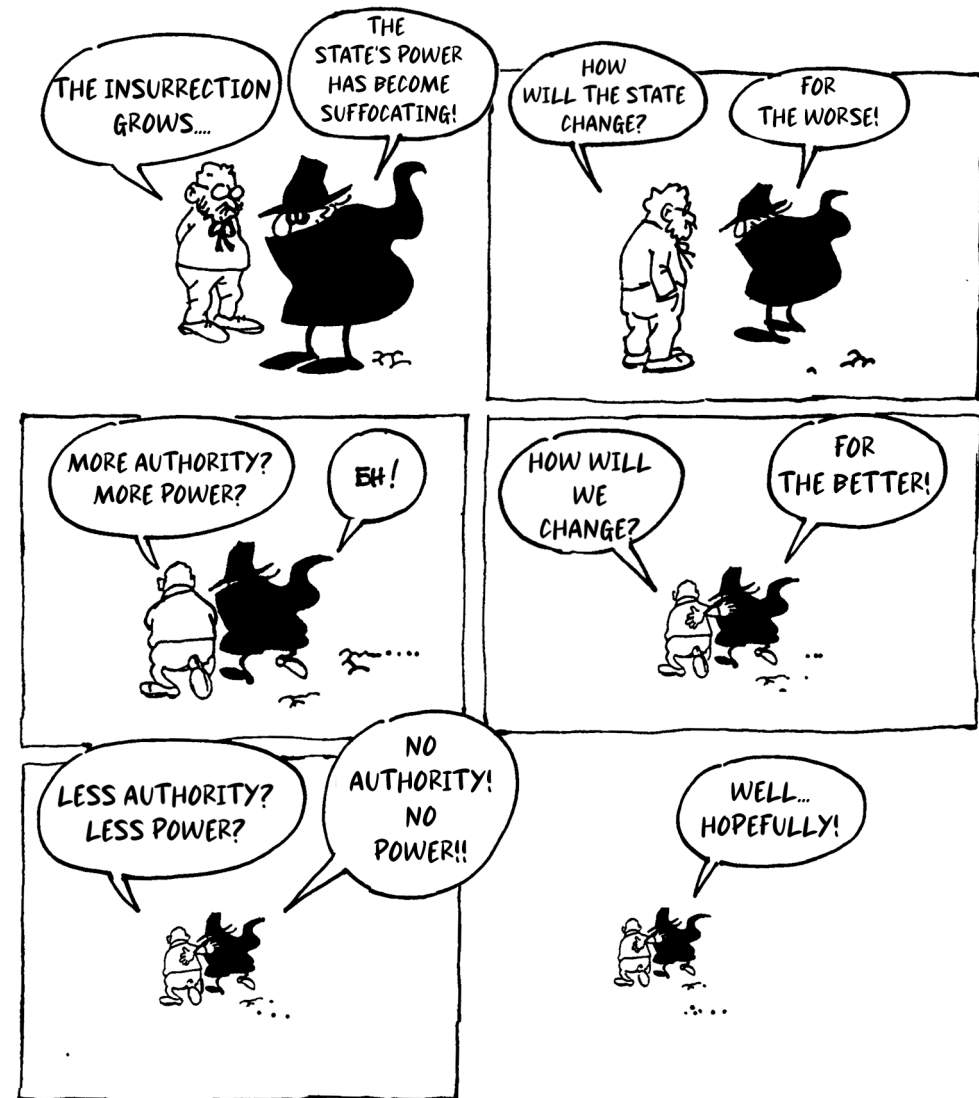
DECEMBER 2011/JANUARY 2012

## PISSED?



MARCH 2012

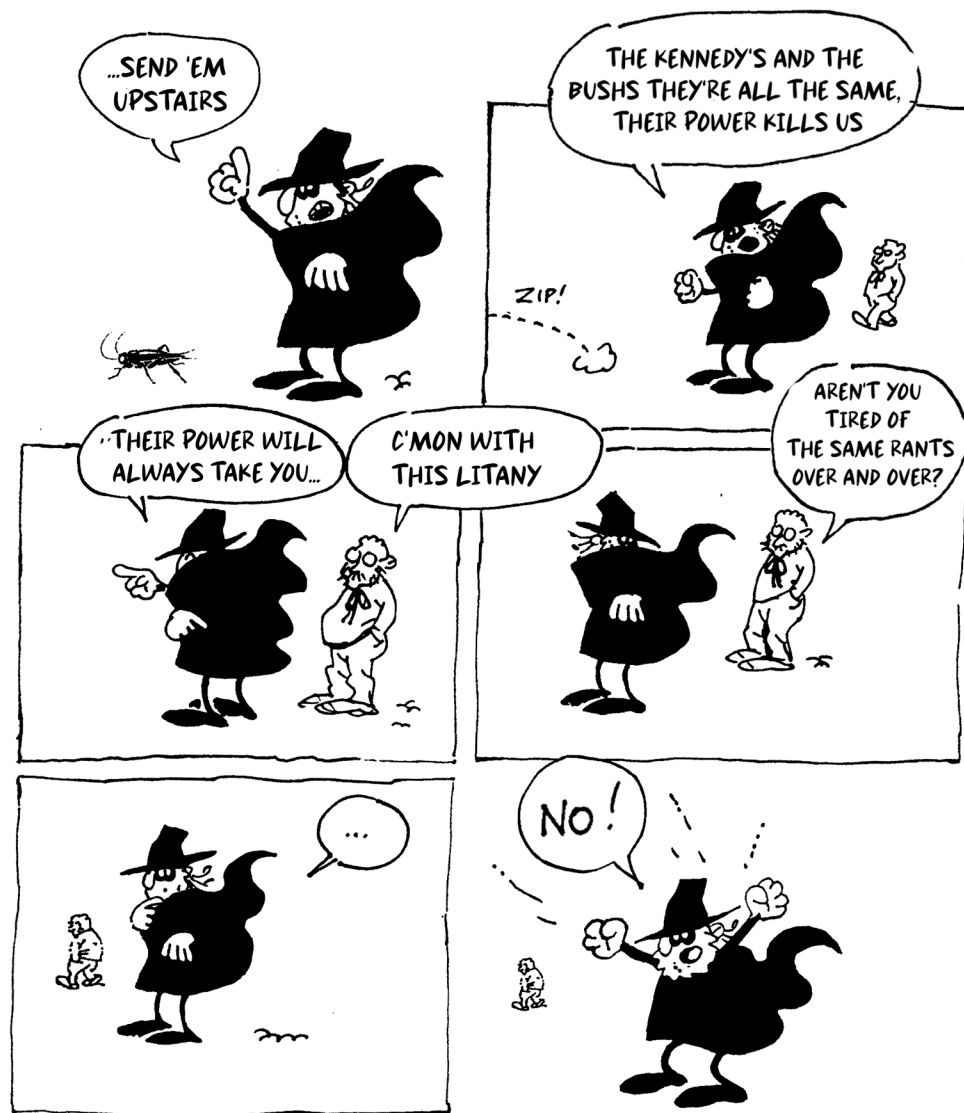
## AUTHORITY AND POWER



SUMMER 2012



## THEIR POWER



NOVEMBER 2012

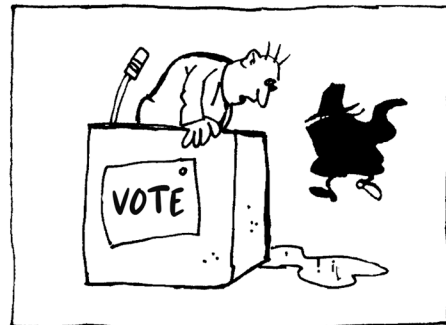
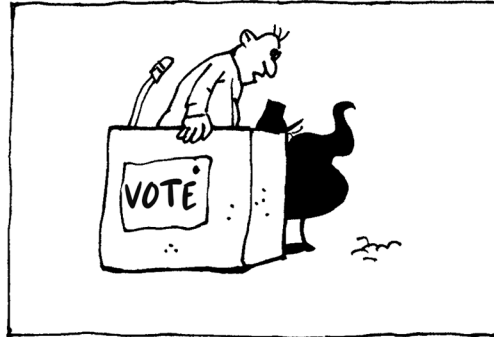
## NIGHTMARE



DECEMBER 2012/JANUARY 2013



## ABSTAINING



I KNOW...I KNOW...  
ITS A USELESS JAB



I ABSTAINED  
ALL MY LIFE...  
AND IT DIDN'T DO  
ANY GOOD!!



BUT...  
WOULD STOPPING  
ABSTAINING  
HELP ANYTHING?



## ALWAYS OUTSIDE AND AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT



Since government today has the power, through the legal system, to regulate daily life and to broaden or restrict the liberty of the citizen, and because we are still unable to tear this power from its grasp...

...we must seek to reduce its power...But this we must do always remaining outside, and against, government, putting pressure on it through agitation in the streets, by threatening to take by force what we demand.



Never must we accept any kind of legislative position, be it national or local, for in so doing we will neutralise the effectiveness of our activity as well as betraying the future of our cause.

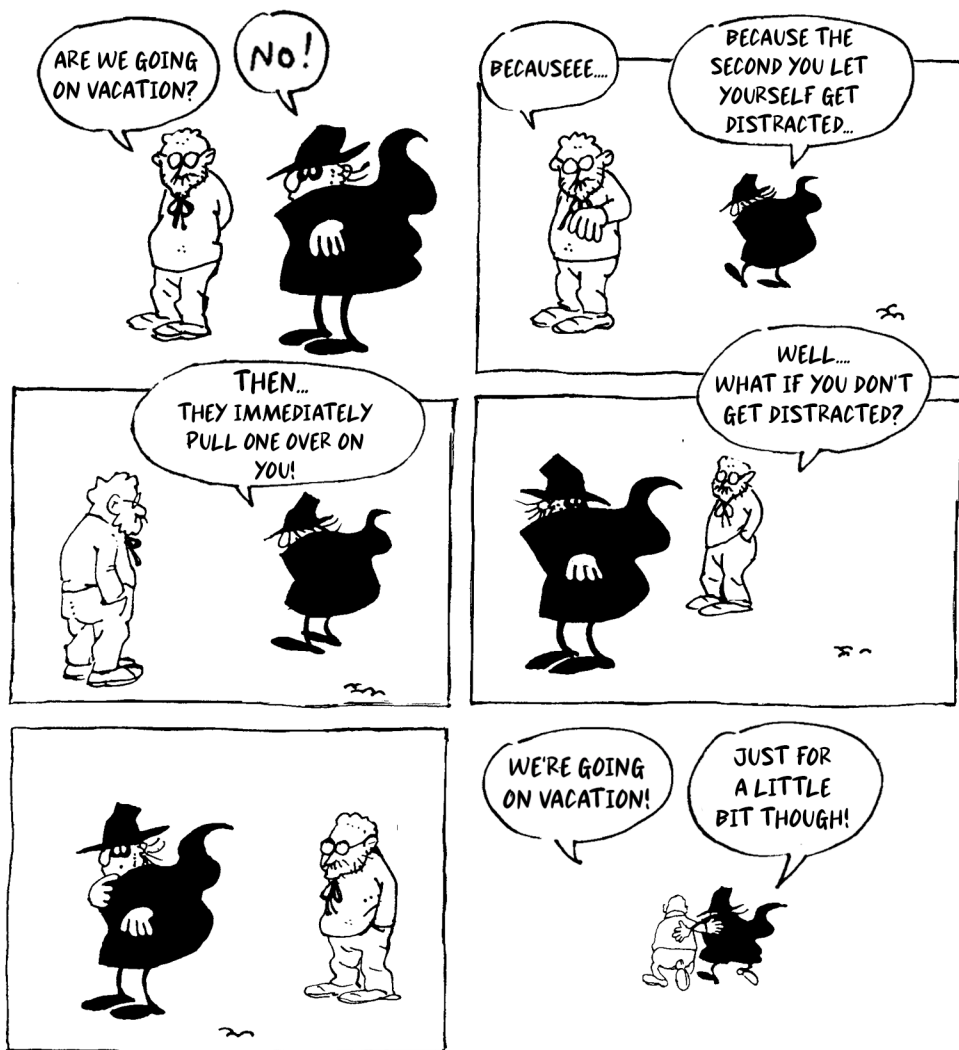


RIGHT ON  
PAGE 54!



\* ERRICO MALATESTA, "AN ANARCHIST PROGRAMME"  
THE COMPLETE WORKS OF MALATESTA :TOWARD ANARCHY  
AK PRESS 2019

## VACATION PT 1



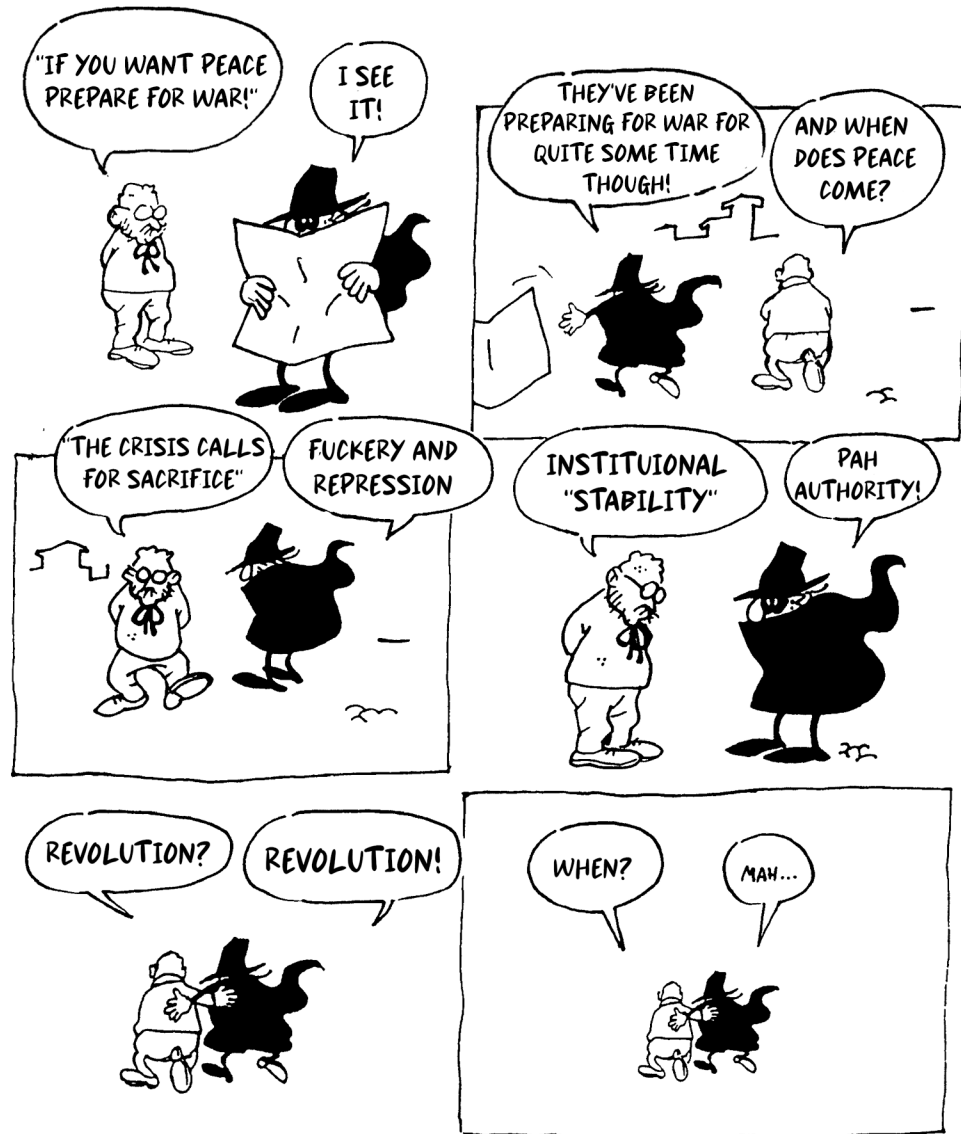
SUMMER 2013

## VACATION PT 2



OCTOBER 2013

# POWER AND REVOLUTION



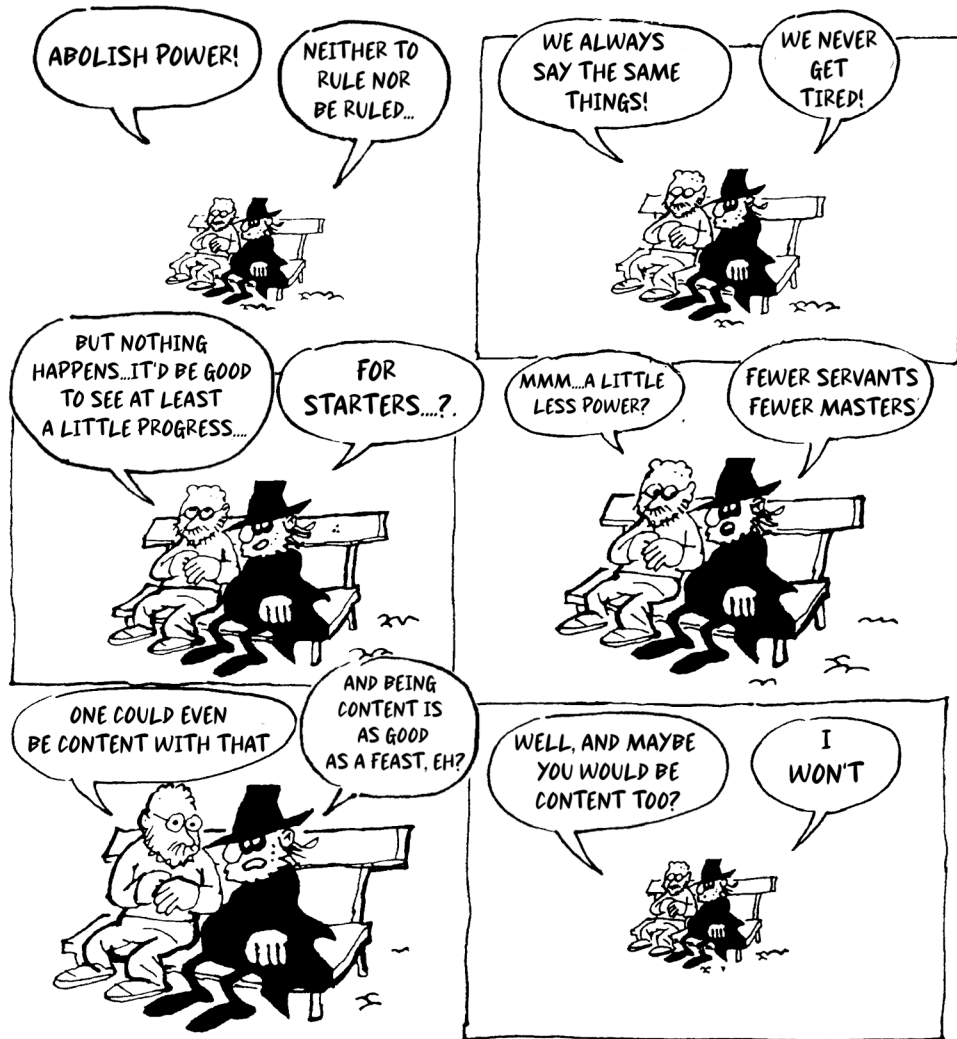
OCTOBER 2013

# GIUSEPPE PINELLI 44 YEARS LATER



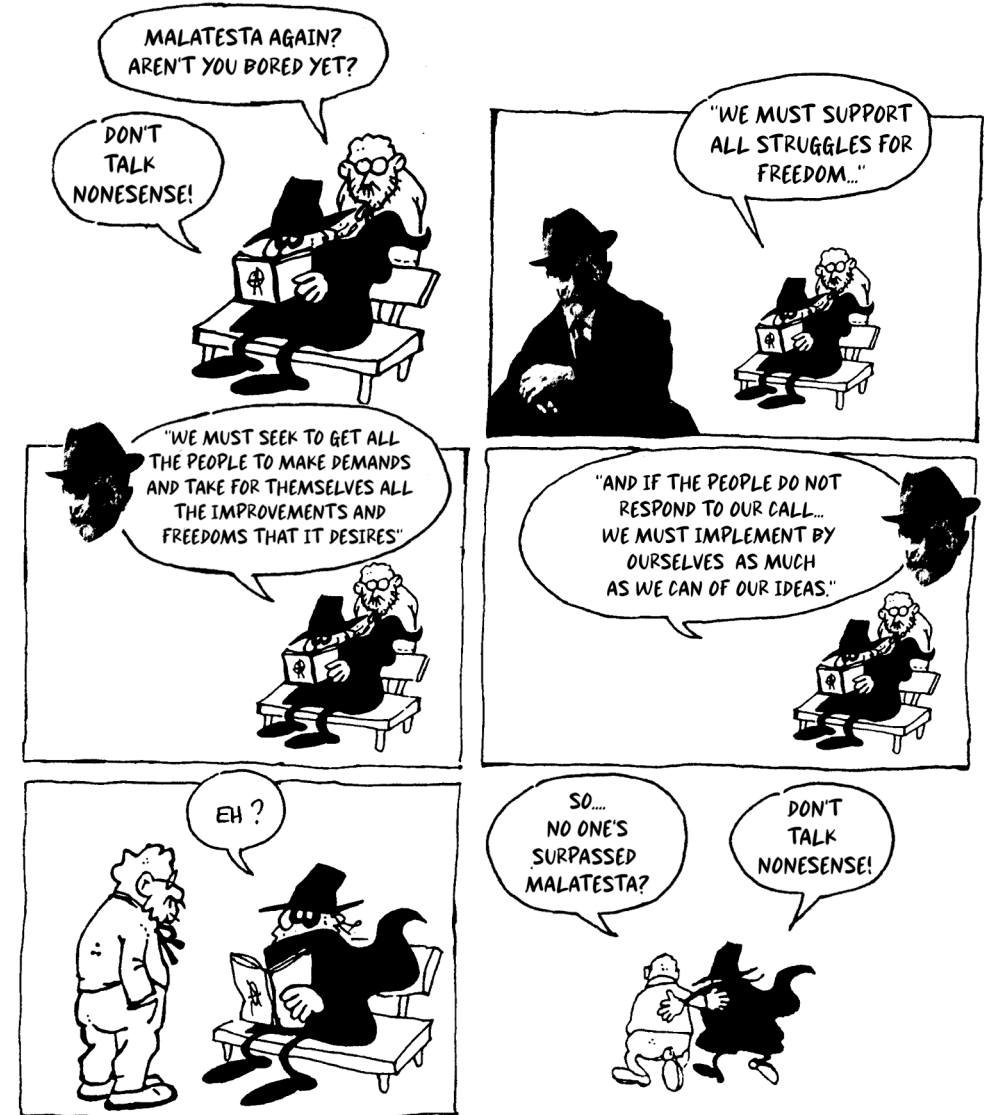
DECEMBER 2013/JANUARY 2014

# BEING CONTENT IS AS GOOD AS A FEAST



FEBRUARY 2014

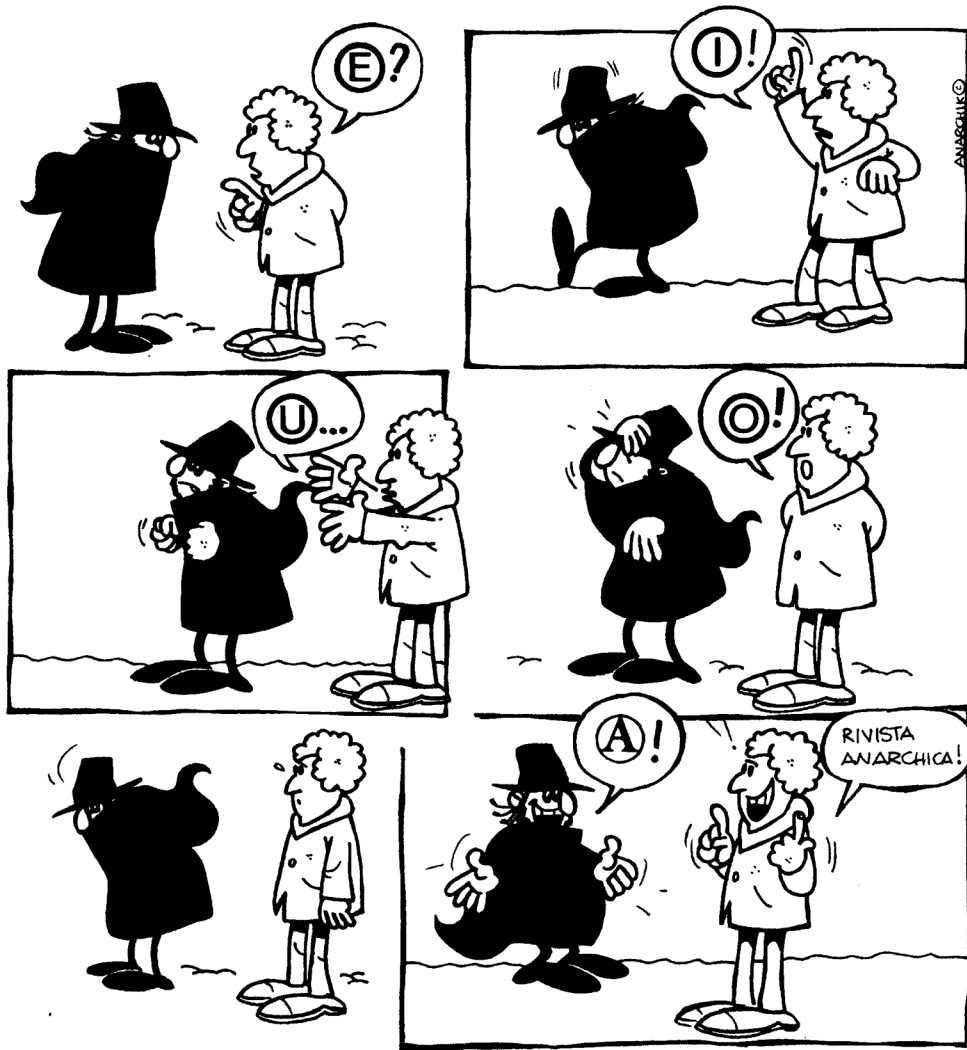
# GOOD OLD MAN ERRICO



SUMMER 2014

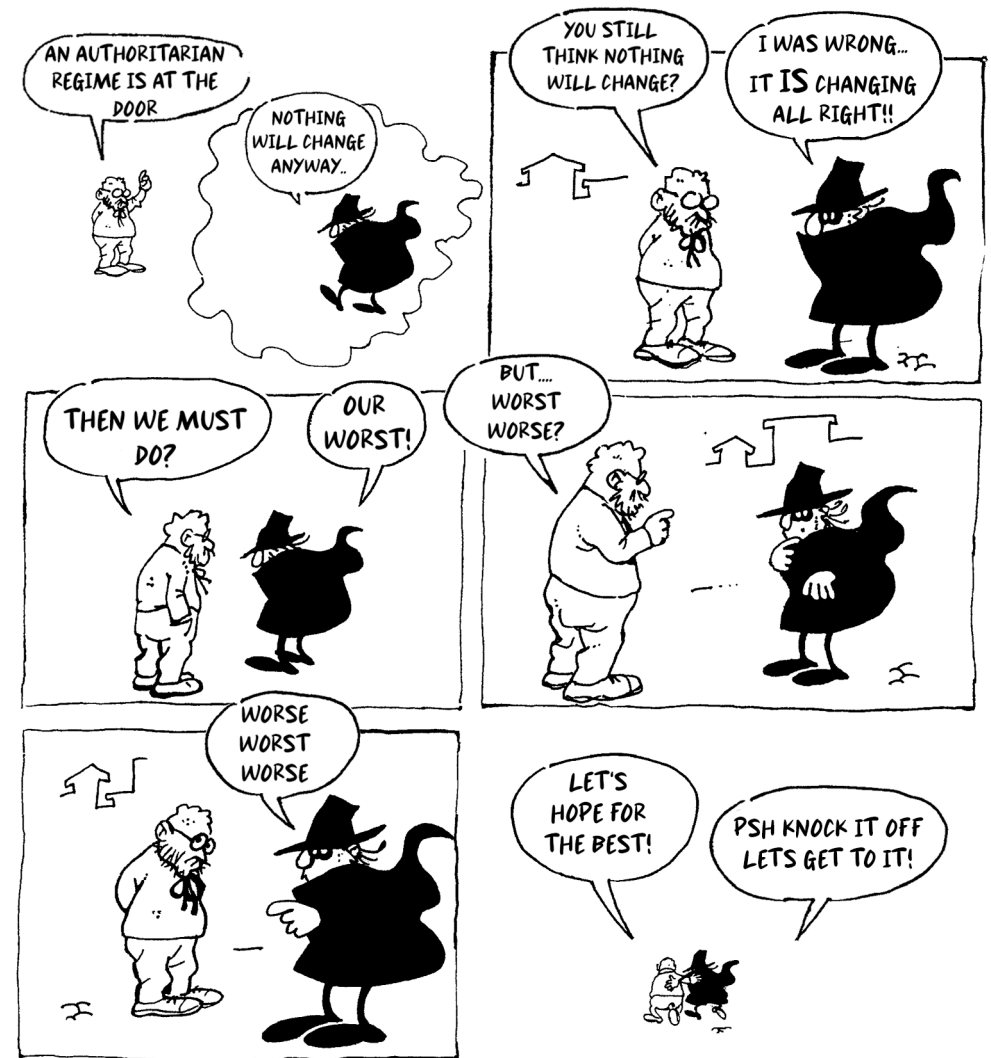


## THE VOWELS



OCTOBER 2014

## WORST



NOVEMBER 2014

## OPTIMIST BY NECESSITY



FEBRUARY 2015

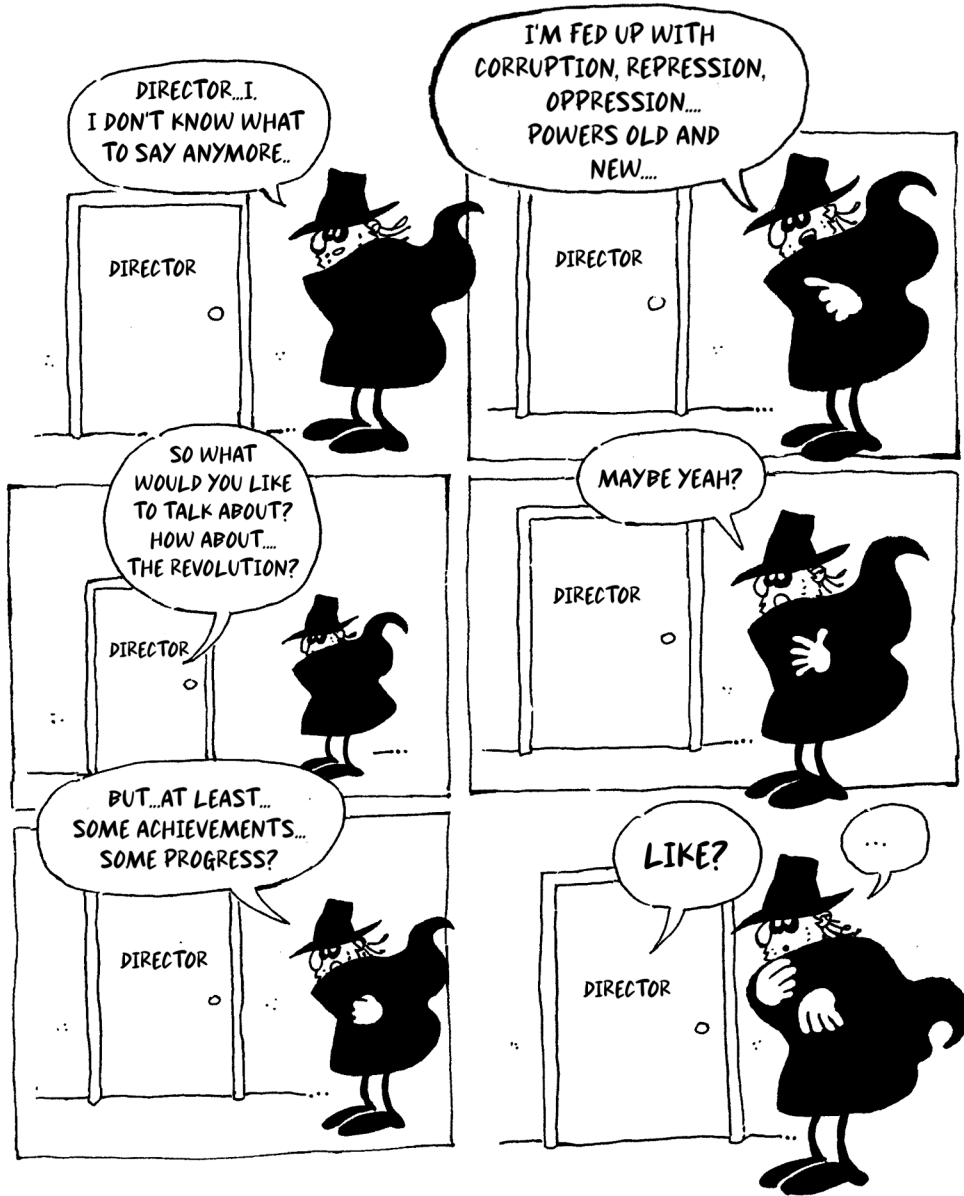
## WITHOUT LIMIT



MARCH 2015



## LIKE?



MAY 2015

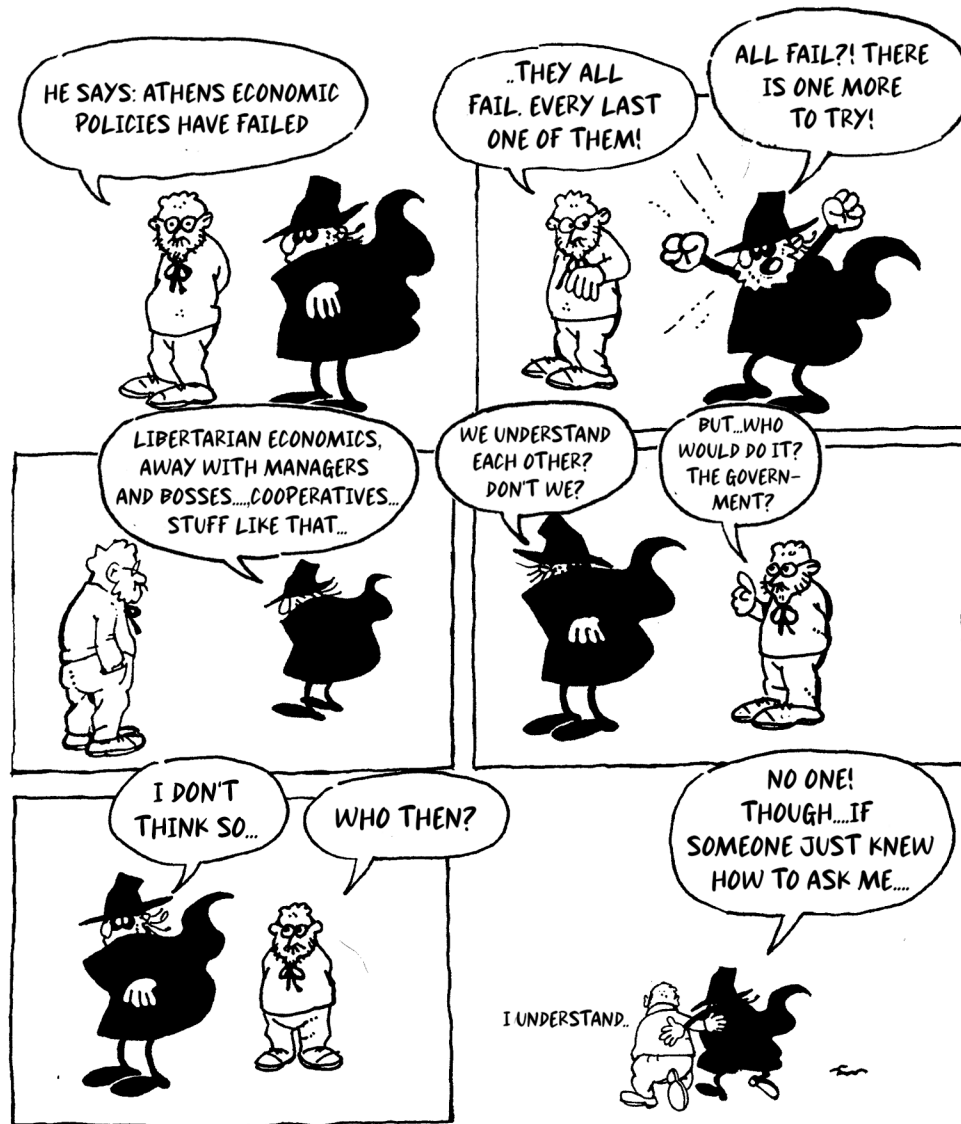
## ANARCHY, DEMOCRACY, DICTATORS



\* MATTEO RENZI, AN ITALIAN POLITICIAN, HAS REPEATEDLY STATED THAT "A SYSTEM IN WHICH NO ONE DECIDES IS CALLED ANARCHY"

JUNE 2015

## LIBERTARIAN ECONOMIES



\* Marco Travaglio, *Il Fatto Quotidiano*, 8 luglio 2015.

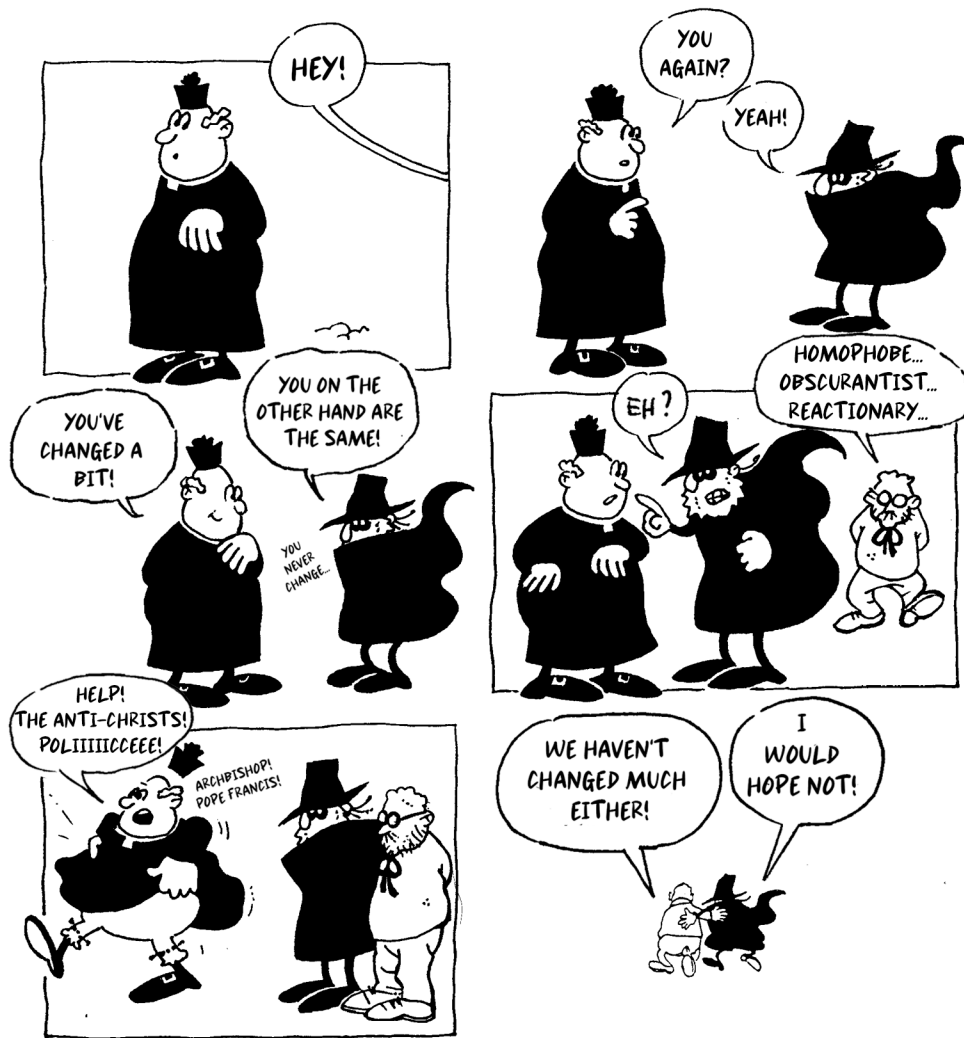
OCTOBER 2015

## NOW AND ALWAYS RESIST



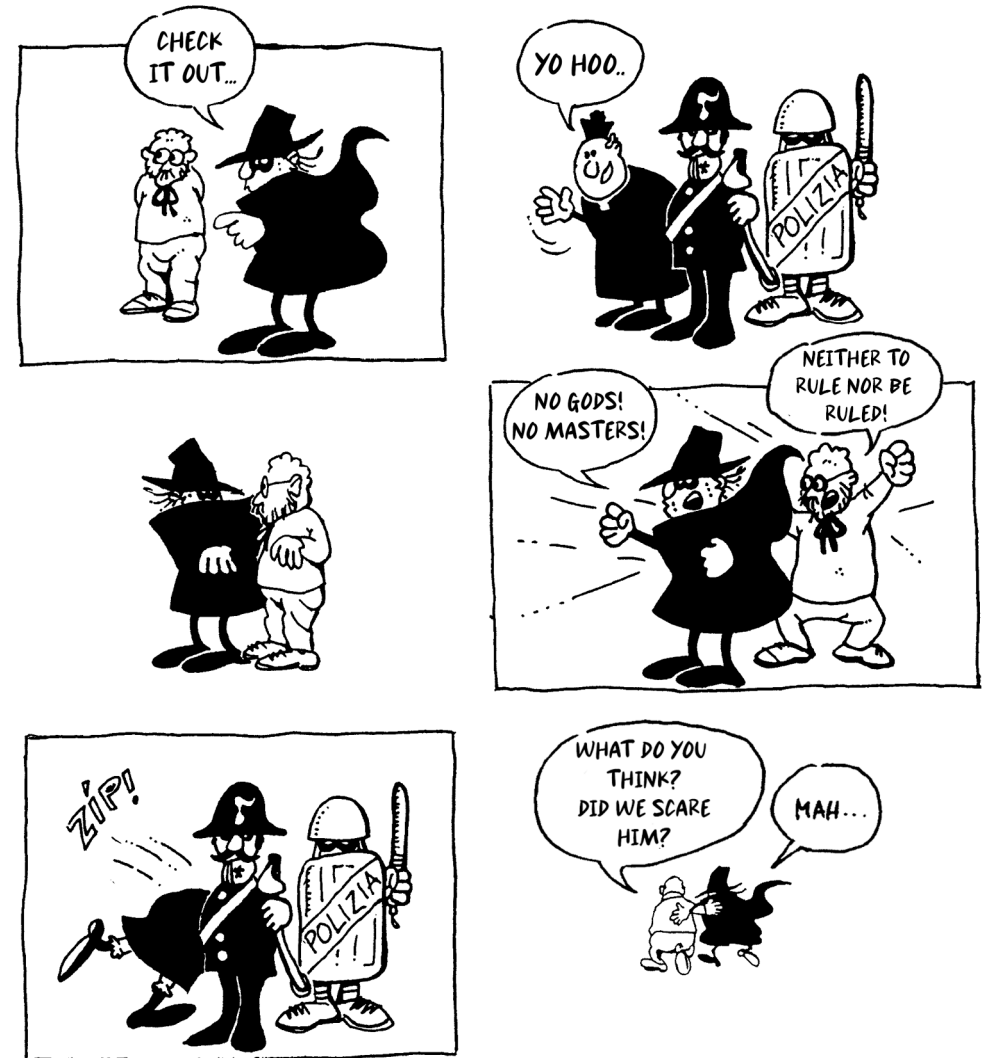
APRIL 2016

## YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED



MAY 2016

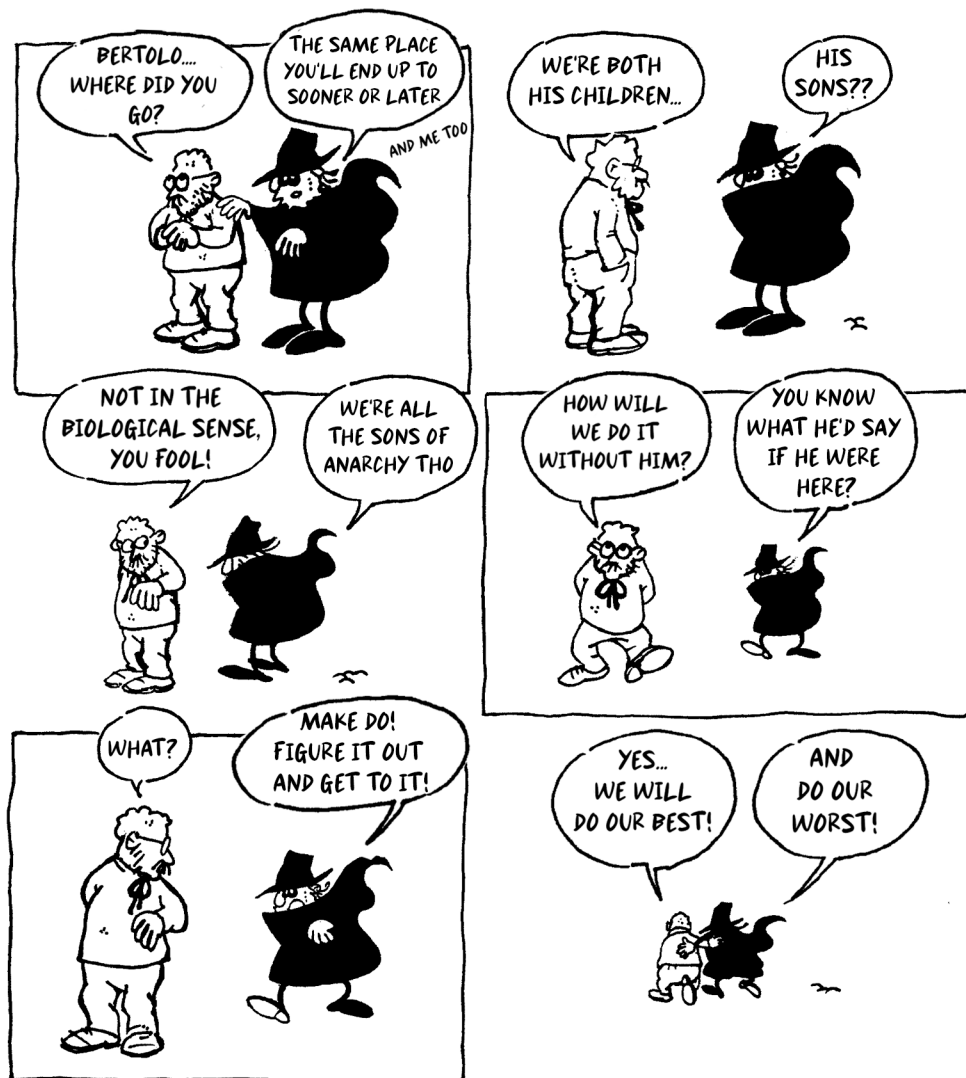
## NEITHER CHURCH NOR STATE



JUNE 2016

# FAREWELL AMEDEO

REMEMBERING AMEDEO BERTOLO



FEBRUARY 2016

# HOPE

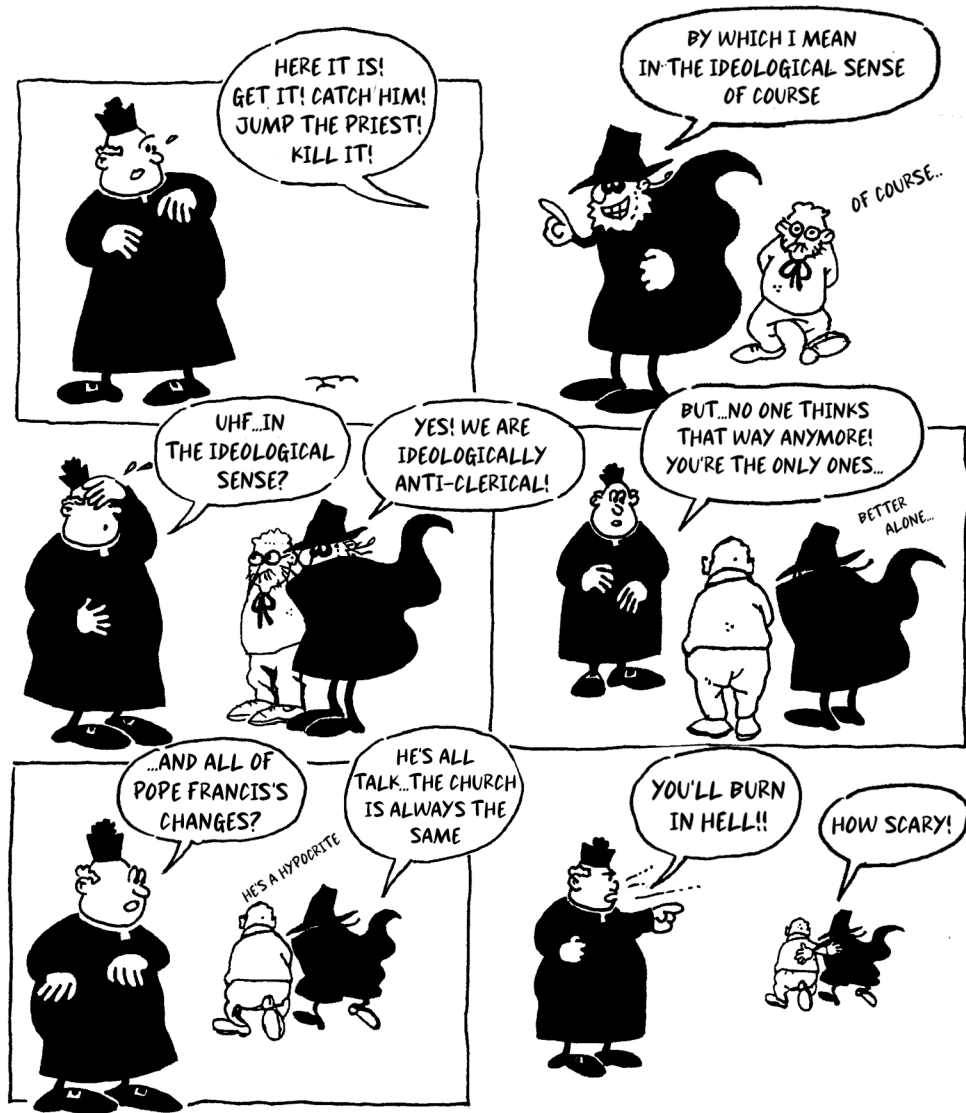


PIETRO GORI- STORNELLI D'ESILIO 1898

MARCH 2016

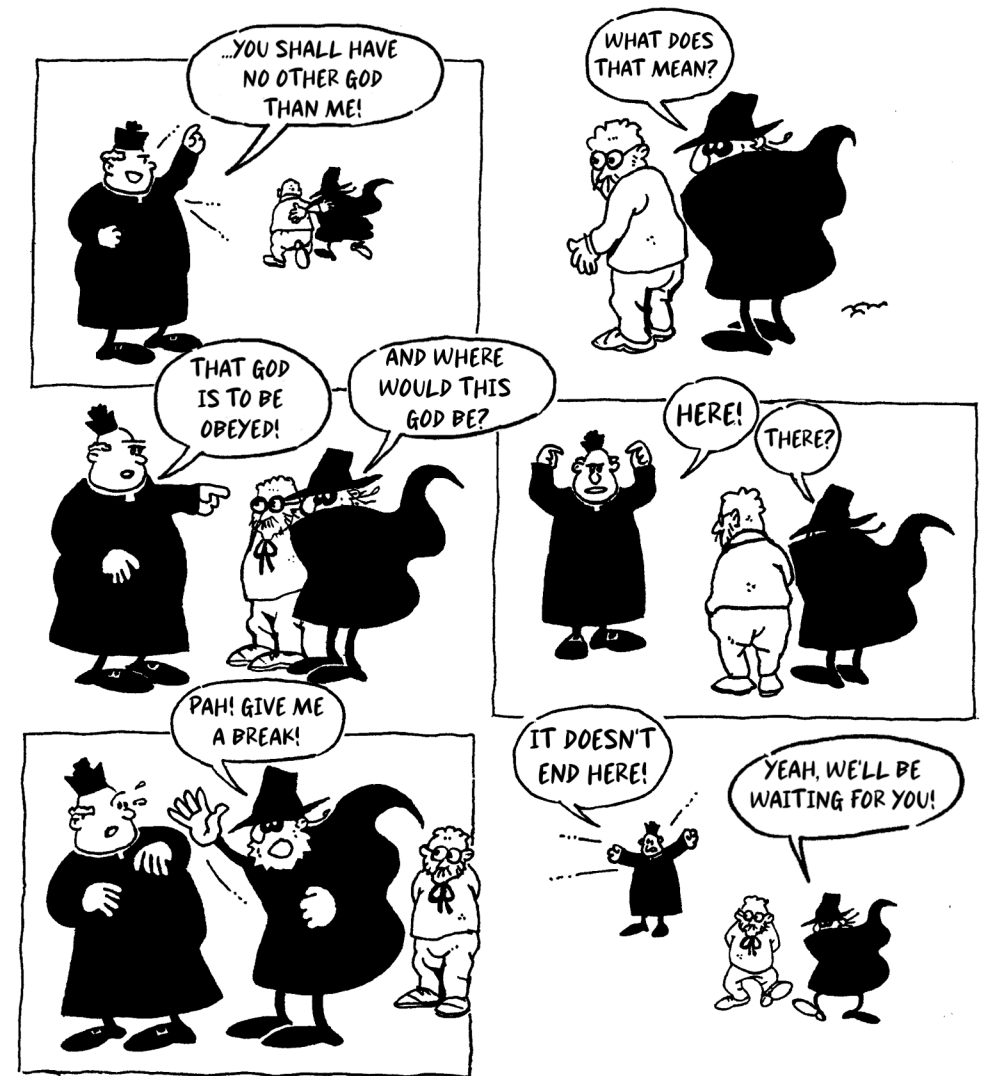


## FRANCIS? NO THANKS



APRIL 2017

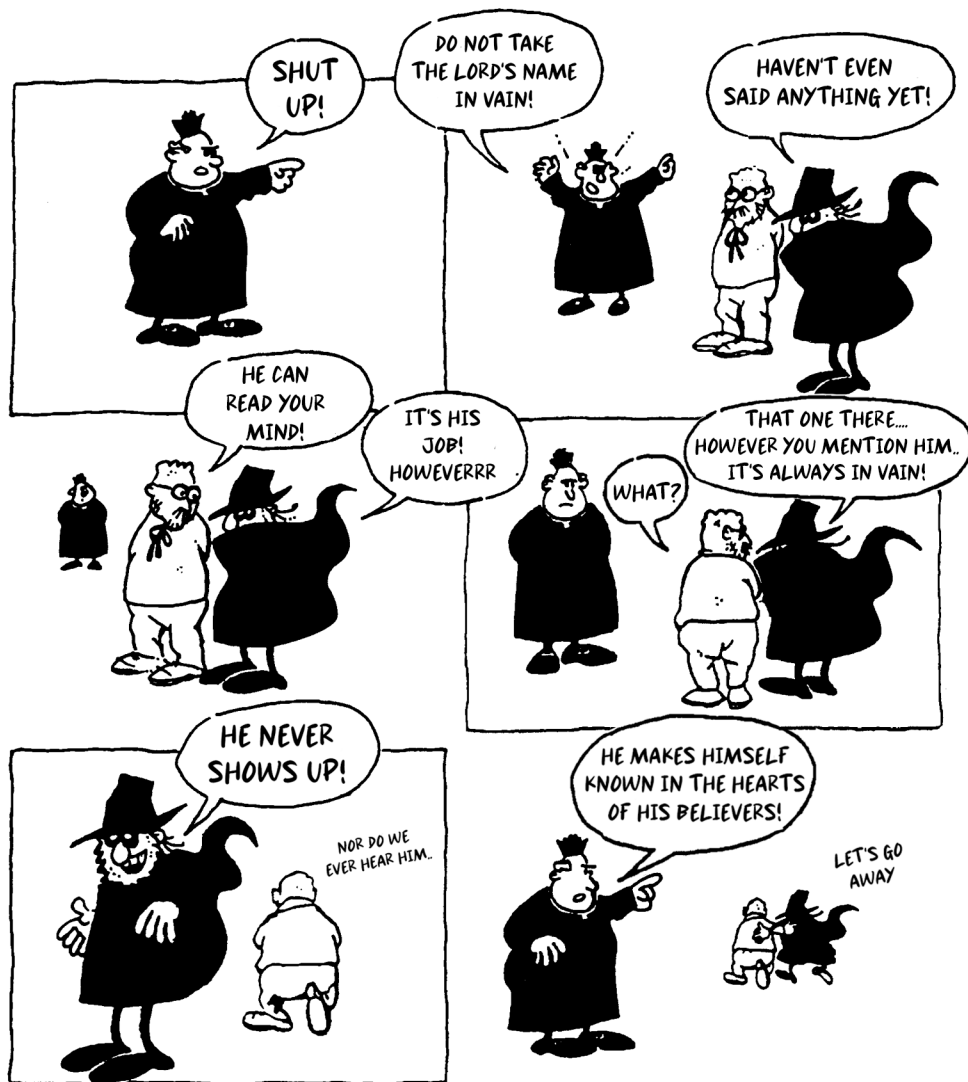
## THE 1ST COMMANDMENT



JUNE 2017

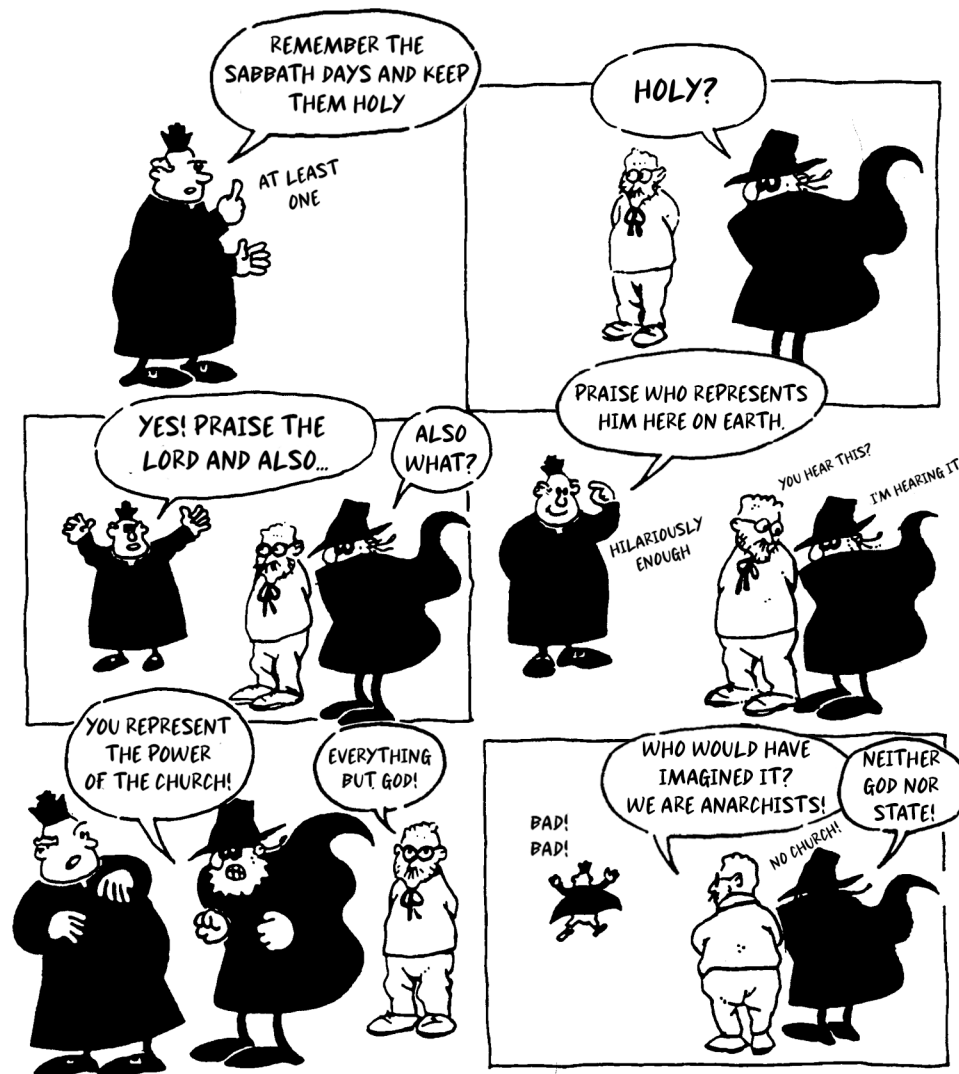


## THE 2ND COMMANDMENT



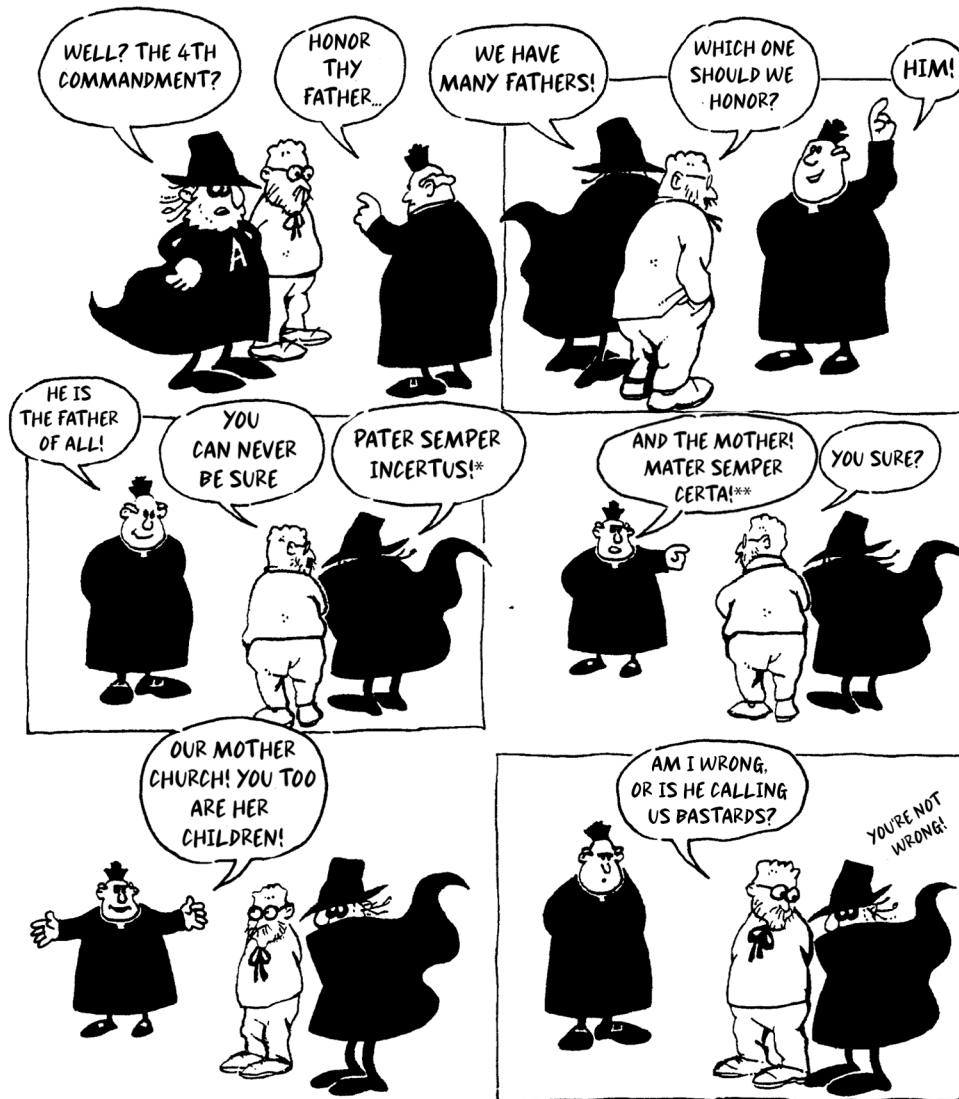
SUMMER 2017

## THE 3RD COMMANDMENT



OCTOBER 2017

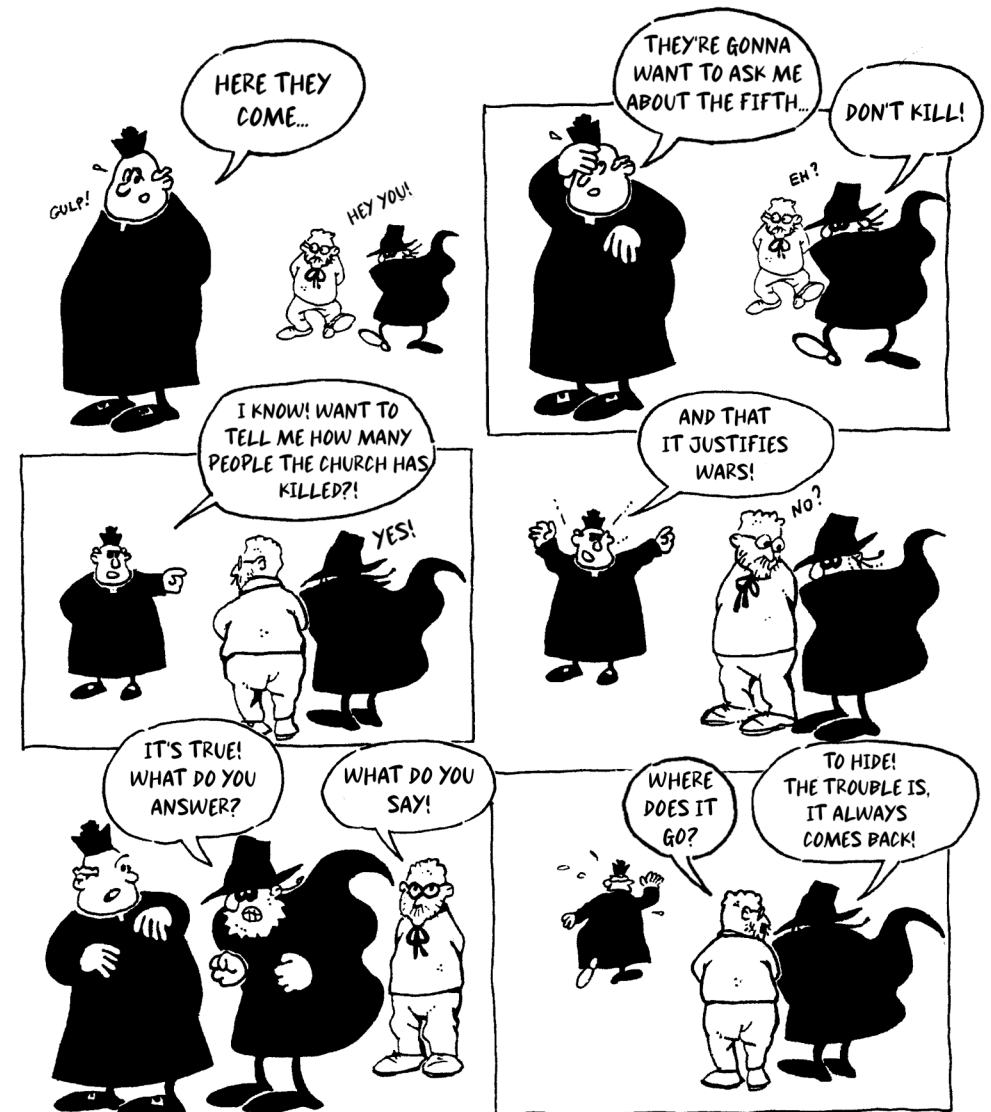
# THE 4TH COMMANDMENT



\*THE FATHER IS ALWAYS UNCERTAIN!  
 \*\*THE MOTHER IS ALWAYS CERTAIN!

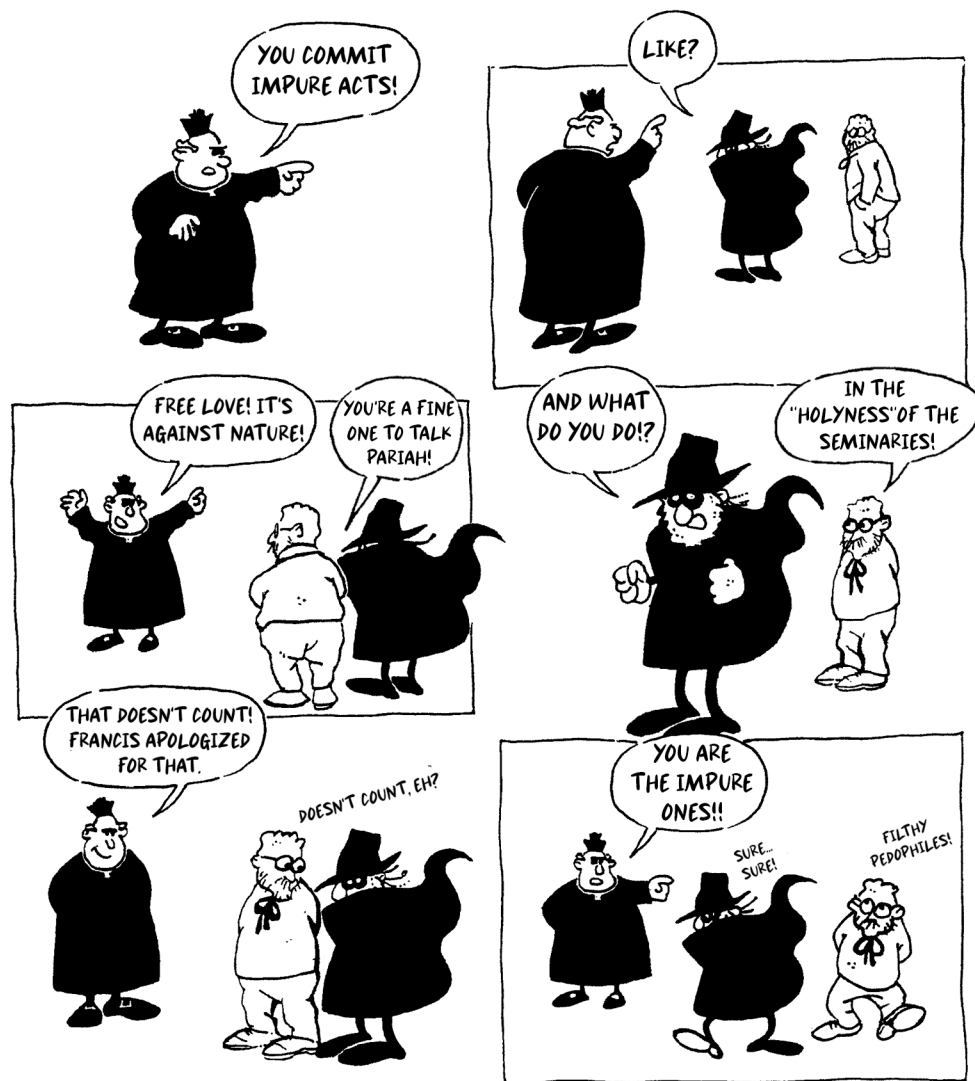
NOVEMBER 2017

# THE 5TH COMMANDMENT



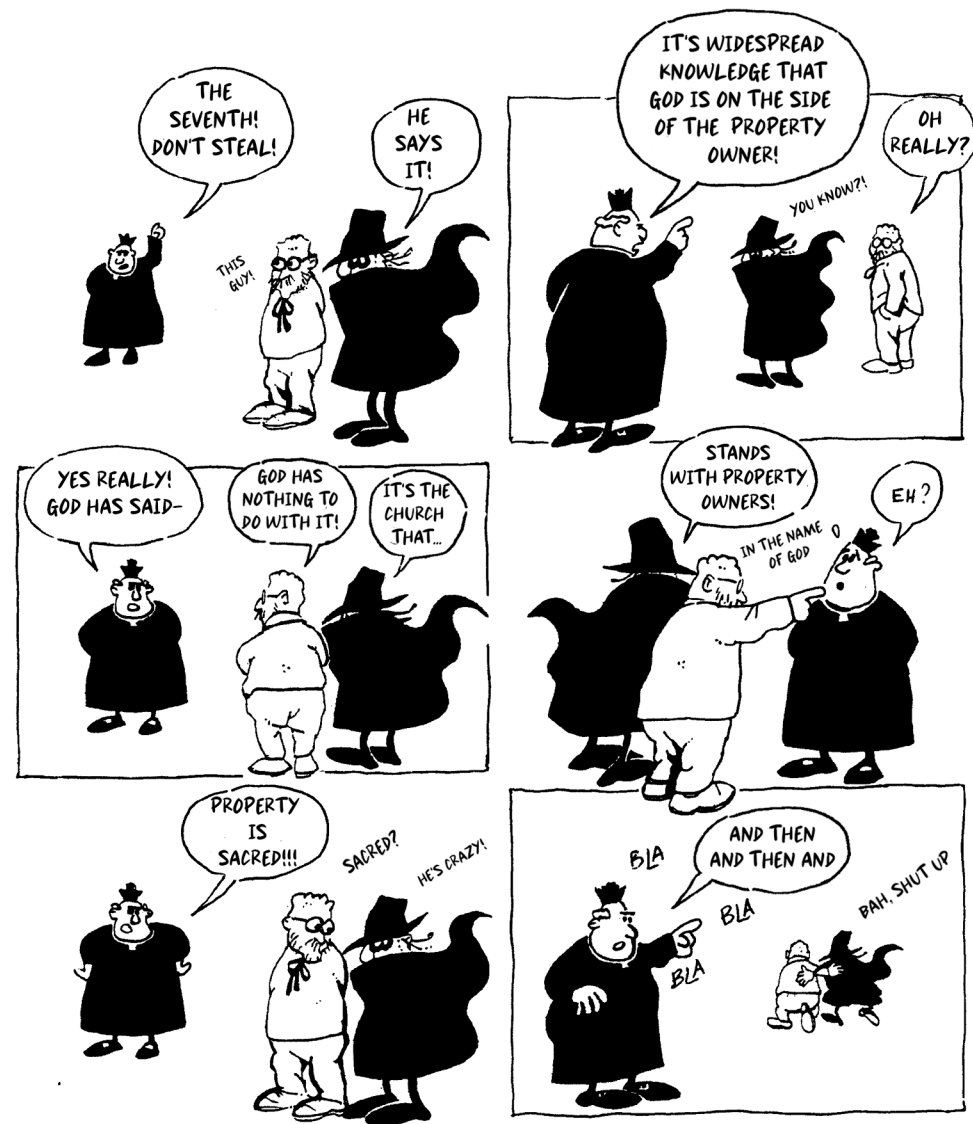
DECEMBER 2017/JANUARY 2018

## THE 6TH COMMANDMENT



FEBRUARY 2018

## THE 7TH COMMANDMENT



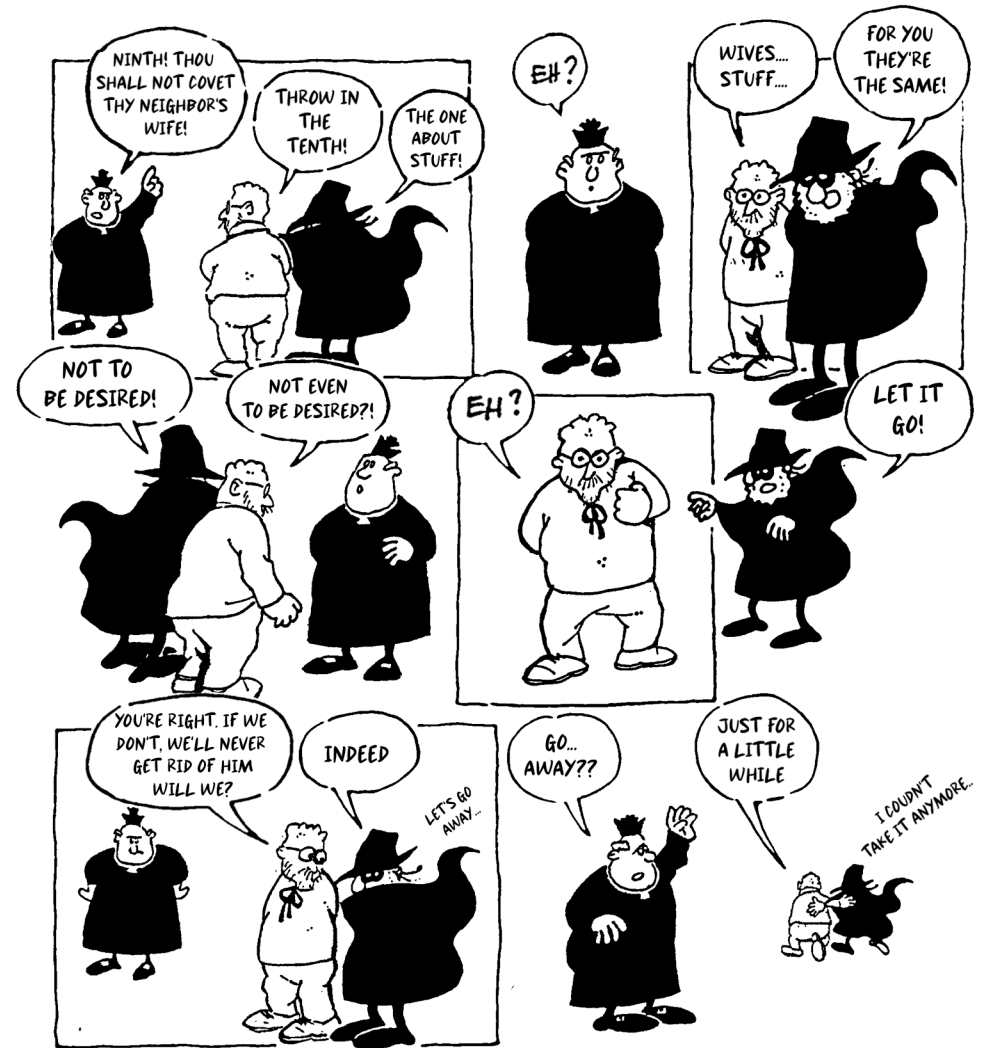
MARCH 2018

## THE 8TH COMMANDMENT



APRIL 2018

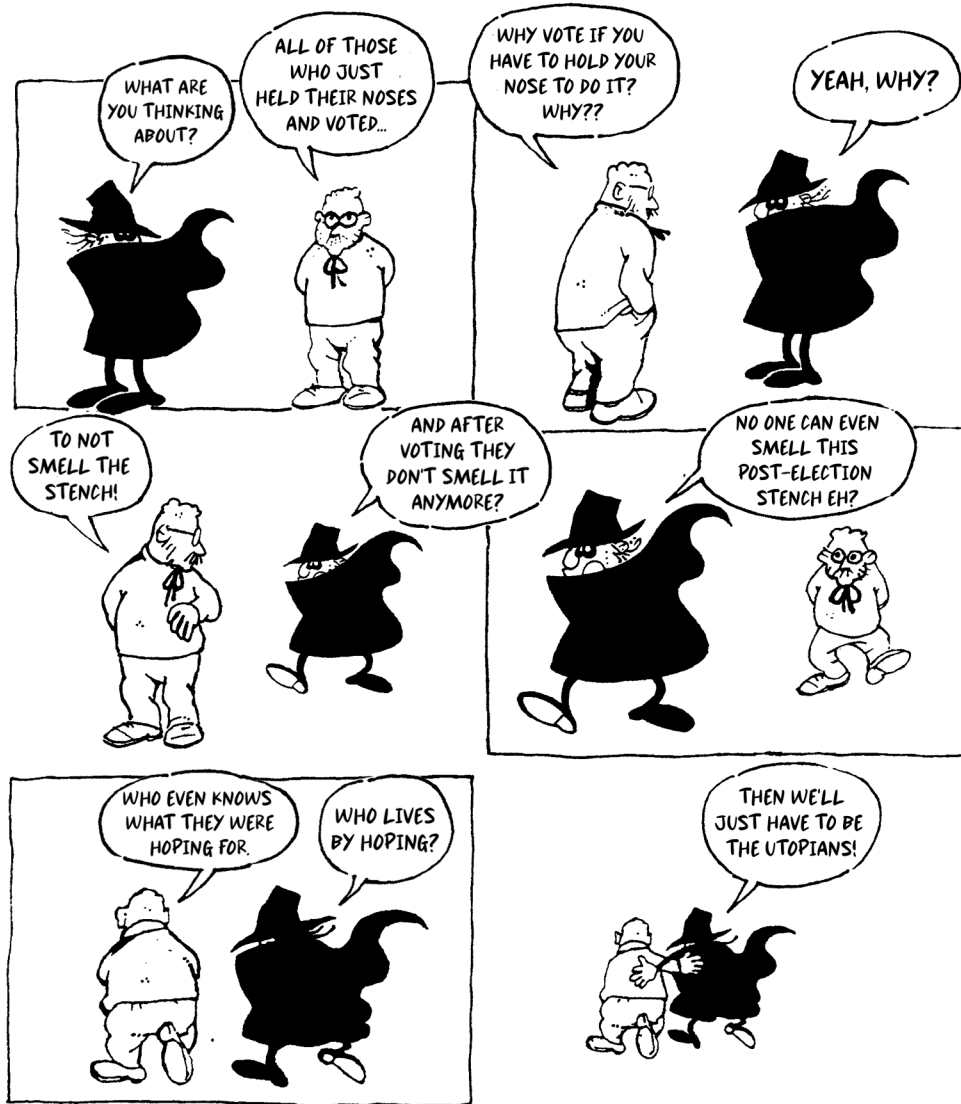
## THE 9TH AND 10TH COMMANDMENT



MAY 2018

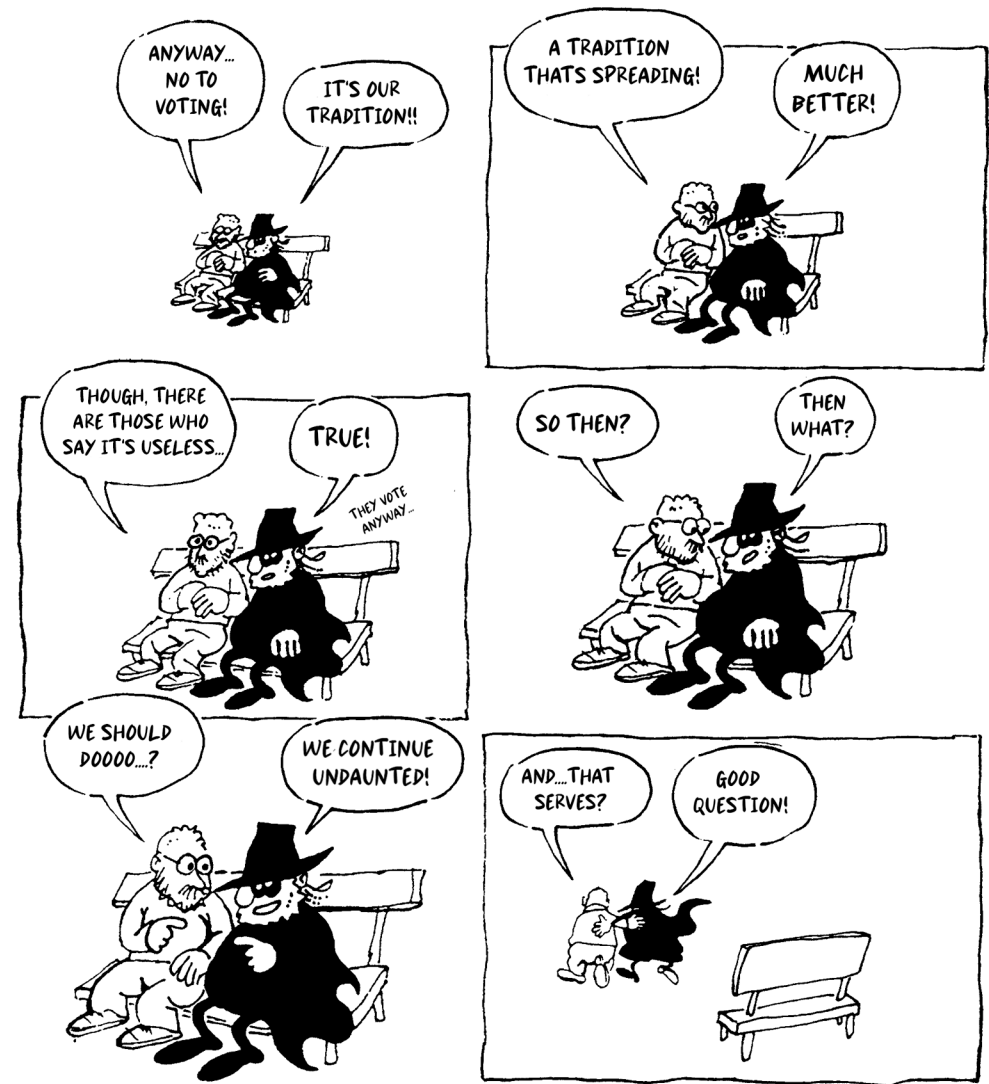


## AFTER THE ELECTION



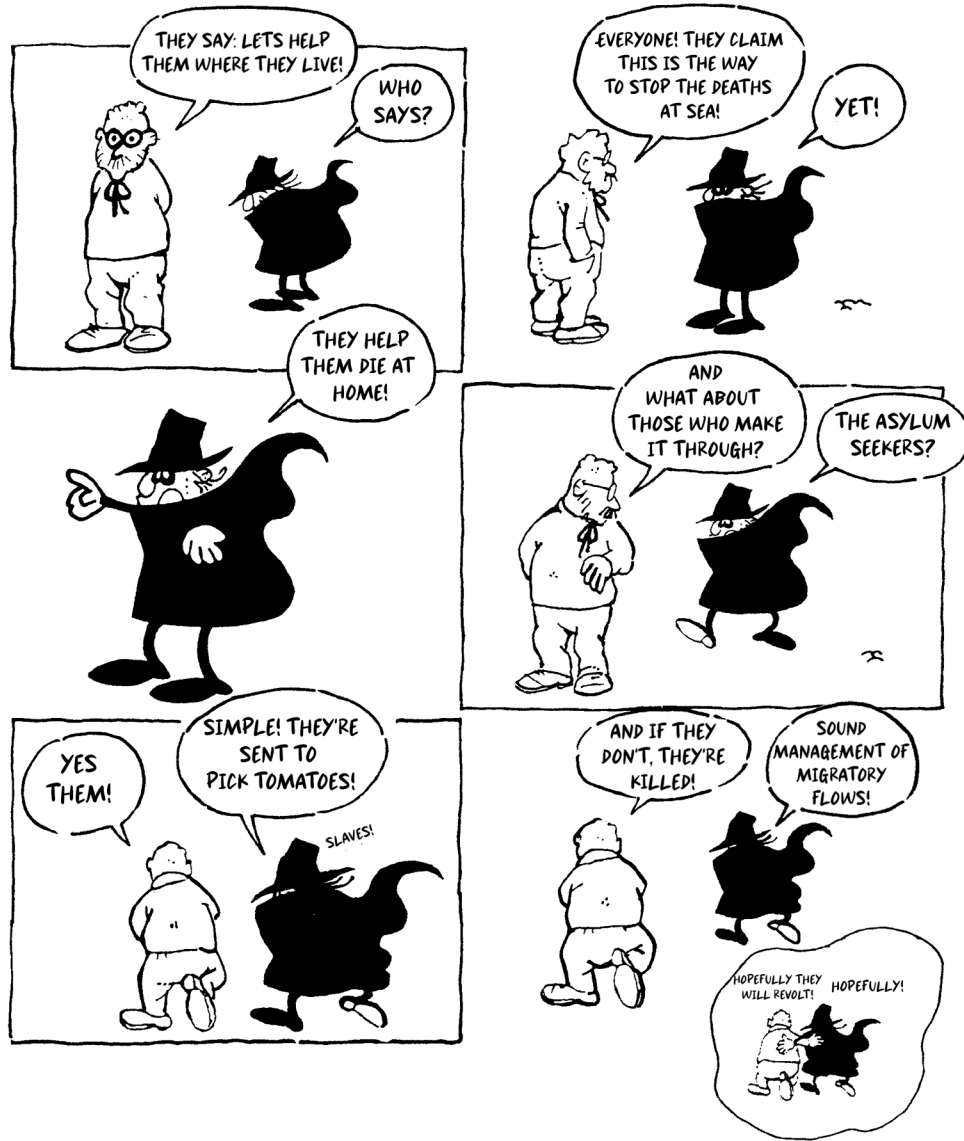
MAY 2018

## GOOD QUESTION



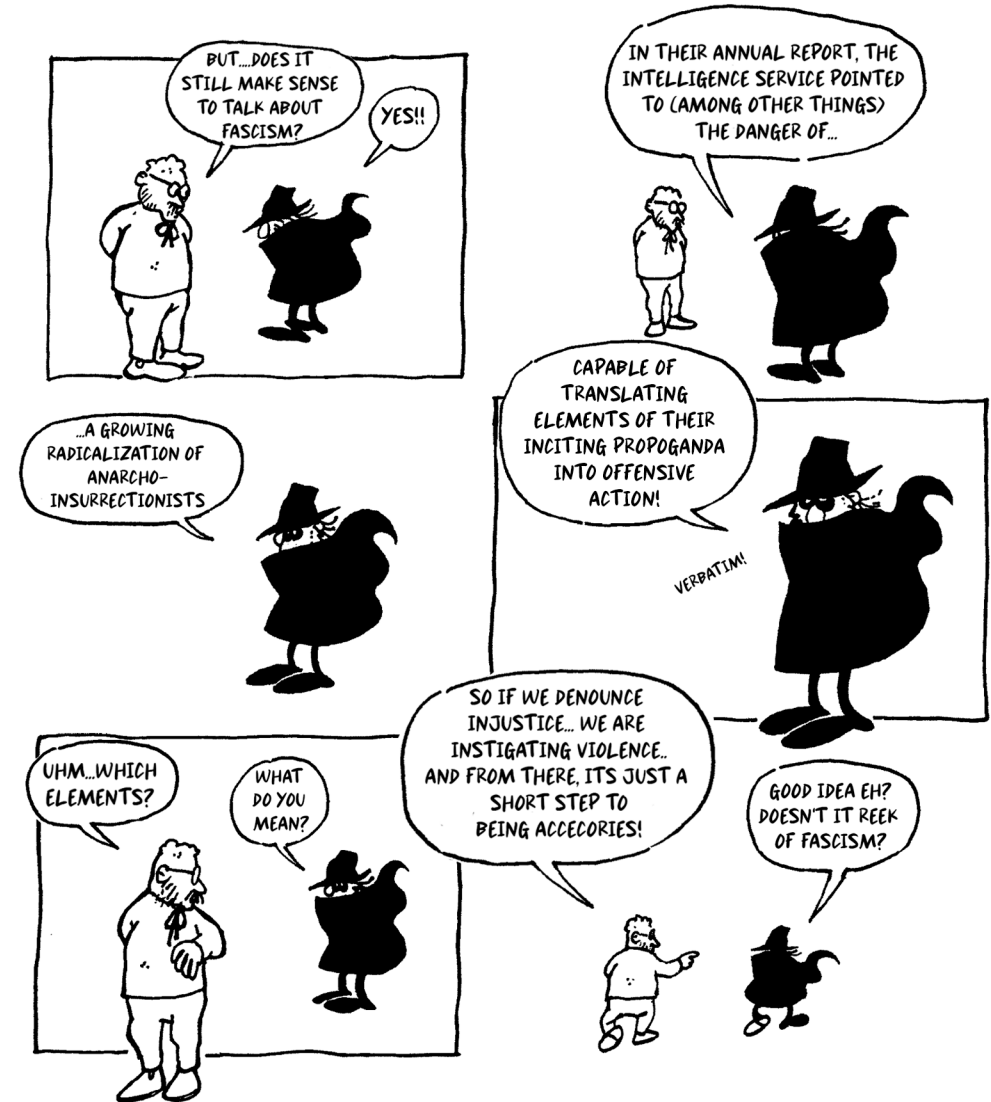
JUNE 2018

## MIGRATION



SUMMER 2018

## STENCH OF FASCISM



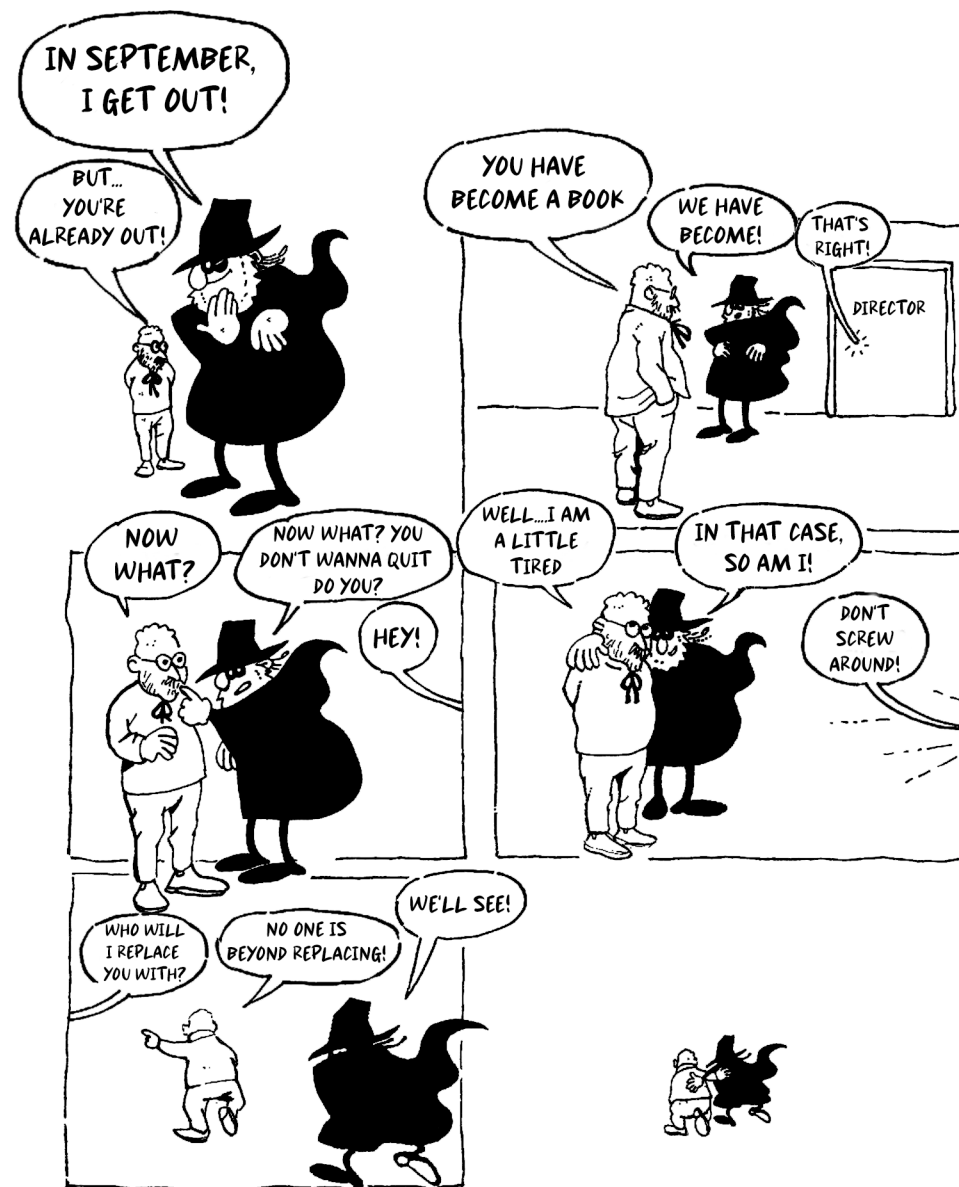
APRIL 2019



from Fabio Santin

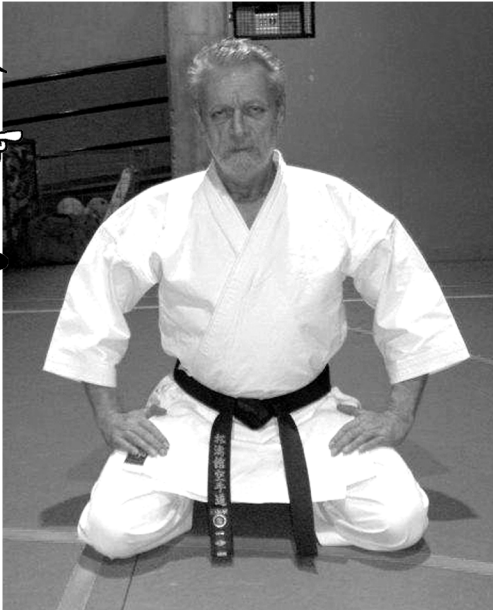
During preparation for the release of *Farò del Mio Peggio* (*I'll do My Worst*), Roberto Ambrosoli suffered from retinal thrombosis which blinded him in one eye. His final comic, published in the October 2019 issue of *A-Rivista*, had already announced a possible end to the Anarchik. A few months later, in April of 2020, Roberto passed away from Covid.

WELL, WE'LL SEE



OCTOBER 2019

# ROBERTO AMBROLSOLI



1942-2020

*Born in Milan in 1942. Karatemaster of the 3rd degree. A professor of microbiology at the University of Turin. Father of three children, two - Alessandro and Daniele - born from the union with his partner Elvira, one - the anarchik - born from the relationship with his partner Amedeo.*

*Adapted from a biography from the  
Centro Libertari*

Roberto was born in 1942 in Milan. In the mid-50s, while attending Parini High School he met Amedeo Bertolo with whom he formed a deep friendship and political affinity that lasted a lifetime. After graduation, Roberto moved briefly to Naples and then Turin where he stayed the rest of his life. His political militancy began in high school, continually inspired by Amedeo, and deepened with the forming of the Gioventù Libertaria Group in Turin, founded with Gerardo Lattarulo, another lifelong friend.

In 1963, he along with Amedeo Bertolo, Luigi Gerli, Eliane Vincileoni, and Giovanni Corradini began publishing *Materialism and Freedom*, a short-lived paper of only three issues. For Roberto, it marked the beginning of his lifelong commitment to publishing.

In the mid-60s, he participated in the founding of the Gruppi Giovanili Anarchici Federati (Youth Federated Anarchist Group) which, as the participants aged, became the Gruppi Anarchici Federati (GAF) in 1969. During this time, he received a degree in microbiology at the University of Turin where he would go on to teach, and he married Elvira,

with whom he welcomed two children, Alexander and Daniele, into the world. The second's birth coincided with him receiving the news of his friend and comrade Pinelli's death.

In the 70s, he was an active participant in the GAF and their various initiatives, starting from the campaign to counter the disinformation of the Piazza Fontana massacre and the murder of Pinelli to helping found and contribute to *A-Rivista Anarchica*, often under the pen name R. Brosio. Through GAF and A-Rivista, he helped in the creation of the Centro Libertari Archivio, G. Pinelli Archivio, and the International Conference organized in Venice in 1984 with the collaboration of the Makhno Group of Milan.

Roberto was also fundamental to the international magazine *Interrogations*, founded in Paris in 1976 by Louis Mercier Vega. When the magazine stopped, Roberto helped to create the Louis Mercier Vega Cultural Center. In the 80s, he joined the editorial collective of the *Vollanto*, and continued to be actively engaged in the conversations and reflections on the changing times and the strategies to meet them.

At the beginning of the 90s, Roberto felt an increasing disenchantment with the world he had struggled to change, which he had, but in unexpected and horrifying ways for a utopianist. He left active militancy but maintained his intimacies and commitment to anarchism.



He became a tireless translator for Eleuthera editions, working on texts from writers like Murray Bookchin, Noam Chomsky, Colin Ward, James C. Scott, Marcus Rediker, and others, while endlessly cheering up the editors with his hilarious (sometimes rude) cartoons that he irrepressibly drew on the margins of paper translations.

Working with Paolo Finzi, the lead editor of *A-Rivista Anarchica*, he collected and produced a book of his Anarchik comics at the end of 2019. Shortly after, he recorded interviews on his first-hand memories of Venice '84 and the murder of Pinelli, which are available on the Centro Libertari. His formidable memory, sharp irony, and clear mind are present throughout. He had been planning with the Centro Libertari to record more and to help collect his experience of the world he lived through.

Roberto died in Turin on April 7, 2020, in the Covid ward of the hospital.

*A remembrance for Roberto from  
From the Bulletino Archivio G.  
Pinelli Issue 55*

It's difficult to talk about a companion and friend with whom you shared many long seasons of struggle, reflections, and experiments, who then suddenly passed away due to a fucking virus (He who was ironically a microbiologist.)

Roberto was one of those friends you want near as you venture onto unknown paths, so it's no

coincidence that we have traveled the entire militant itinerary of the last few decades together, sharing not only the passion to act and to think, but also many moments of close conviviality that strengthened our relationship, which was not only political, but also friendly.

In the Cover Story section of this Bulletin, there is a brief biography of Roberto, but the entire human and intellectual journey of an acute, cultured, satirical, passionate, and imaginative anarchist such as him cannot be captured in a few lines. The series of praises present about him would have, in truth, made him laugh because Roberto was anything but a "saintly militant."

Much of what he did, as for all good anarchists, cannot be told. Much remains- in his writings and in our memories – of his creative verve, his social and political foresight, and of his irreverent spirit. It is precisely this spirit that he poured liberally into the iconic character he invented in the mid-sixties, together with Amedeo Bertolo, that is the enemy of the state, the Anarchik.

His Anarchik's first appearance (unnamed and only sketched) dates to the mimeographed pamphlet *Who are the Anarchists?* produced in 1966 by the Gioventù Libertaria Group of Milan, but he was officially birthed with a definitive name and appearance when he appeared in the single issue of *The Enemy of the State* in 1967.

Even the Anarchik was anything

but a hero, saint, or martyr. He is small, ugly, surly, and above all impertinent, with his wide-brimmed hat, a billowing cloak, and shoes comically stretched from oversized feet. All strictly in black.

The character fully reflected the speech and symbols of the pre-and post-1968 anarchisms, offering the libertarian left a character suited to the times despite his deliberately old-fashioned (or vintage if you prefer) air. He "pierces" the anarchist imagination at an international level, a bit like the circle A which was born in the same breeding ground as the Anarchik. Not surprisingly, the Anarchik would be taken up again and again and reworked, like what happened with the circle A.

Anarchik aside, Roberto was in reality a tireless illustrator who did not limit himself to the simple style that defined his alter egos (of which there are some decidedly dirty comics scattered about in private archives). On the contrary, he drew (almost) compulsively in all situations, even the most "official" ones. His caricatures of friends and companions, whom he immortalized with quick and expert strokes, are famous (but private), and mostly made on the greasy napkins of cheap taverns where we went to drink and laugh after long, heated meetings.

Meetings in which we talked about the universe and how to change it, moving from analysis of the then emerging techno-bureaucratic class to self-management practices in a

society; moving to post-industrialism, from criticisms of the cooperative movement, once glorious and now decayed, to concrete possibilities for experiencing anarchy today and here.

That world no longer exists. The aged and somewhat disenchanted Anarchik, who rose to new life in *A-Rivista* in the last ten years after a long period of silence, knew it well. Our character also took a pause to reflect and measure the distance between there and here, from that time to this time. Just a pause to regret a little, to regret that what was lost, and that what wasn't small. But perhaps also to adapt, to re-calibrate, to reinvent today what Roberto and his companions collectively wrote and articulated 50 years ago in a book that called for a need that was valid for those times and ours; that is, to think and act to build "a new analysis for the usual strategy."



# AMEDEO BERTOLO



1941-2016

*Amedeo Bertolo (Milan, 1941-2016) taught agricultural economics at the University of Milan, but was also one of the most important Italian anarchists of the second half of the twentieth century. His notoriety dates back to the early 1960s when, together with a group of anarchists, he kidnapped the Spanish vice-consul of Milan to prevent the execution in Spain of a young anti-Francoist. Alongside his political action, he carried out intense editorial activity, founding various newspapers such as the monthly A-Rivista Anarchica, the quadrilingual magazine Interrogations and the quarterly Volontà. But his main interest was in books and he founded Antistato editions in 1975 and then in 1986 Elèuthera, of which he was the editorial manager until his death.*

*The following is Paoli Finzi's remembrance of Amedeo published in issue 413 of A -Rivista*

In the films of Italian neo-realism, from the end of the Resistance to the 1960s, it was often featured. Many considered it “the country priest’s motorcycle,” but in our case, use and user were very different things. That somewhat “protected” motorcycle, the Moto Guzzi Galletto, usable even for long trips, in Amedeo’s hands, served to reach Spain several times, from Milan, bringing to anarchists engaged in the anti-Francoist underground struggle, once, an entire mimeograph (disassembled) that would later be used to produce leaflets.

The spread of the word, of the anarchist word, from those youthful journeys in solidarity, and not without risks, to the founding and management (with Rossella, a lifelong companion), twenty years later, of a publishing house (Elèuthera) that has so far marked the most successful attempt to spread anarchist and libertarian ideas outside the usual “rounds” of the anarchist movement and its environs, without ever losing his contact and relations, as can be seen from the publisher’s catalog.

Amedeo Bertolo (Milan, 1941-2016) was a significant figure

in the anarchist movement and libertarian thought from the second half of the 20th century.

He was also the creator of *A-Rivista*, though he tells it a little differently. It was included in issue No. 358 of a small paper, the one for which we worthily celebrated the first 40 years of A, written by us and republished at the end of this issue. However, in a good turn of comrades, in those years between the 1960s and 1970s, especially around the time of the Piazza Fontana massacre (Dec. 12, 1969) and three days after the assassination in the police headquarters of Giuseppe Pinelli, the intellectual and militant figure of Amedeo stood-out as a particularly organizational spirit.

His character was not easy, a bear, sometimes sociable and other times secluded. Yet, he often exerted a strong influence, almost magnetic at times. In his clarity, and sometimes in his toughness, we grasped a credibility, a demanding of himself and others, that tended to make him a natural “leader,” a delicate issue, especially among anarchists who reject power, but then often do not know how to hold up their sensibilities and find concrete and relational solutions to go against the trend. When things became confused like this, it would then be Amedeo’s task, in the 1980s, to write an illuminating essay on power, domination, and authority.

When one - a comrade, among us anarchists - dies, it often is





*Amedeo with Rossella Di Leo, his lifelong partner and companion of many projects*

said “another will take his place.” Rhetorically, this is perhaps a nice platitude. With Amedeo, it will definitely not happen, in my opinion. Too specific was his role. Amedeo was strongly connected to his anarchism in his thoughts and in his relationships.

In these weeks and for now, in a collective way and not yet well coordinated, we have begun to collect his writings, also identifying them by acronym, nome de plume, etc. In the magazine *A*, we collected about 40, not many considering that in the first four years of *A*, Scarlett and Amedeo had worked intensely as members of the editorial collective, leaving at the end of December 1974, to devote themselves to other editorial and militant projects.

So, for 42 years, Amedeo had been out of the editorial staff, yet the dialogue between the two of us never stopped. When there were important choices to be made, decisions to be made, I would turn to him. Sometimes he would help me think things through and I would

agree with him. Sometimes not. Sometimes I disagreed with him, but the reasoning he could develop was, even in disagreement, always helpful.

His logical rigor, his ability to see things as they were (without “ham on the eyes”), and his clarity that at times seemed to border on cynicism, were a constant and a certainty.

Someone like Amedeo is truly irreplaceable, and his very dear friend Roberto Ambrosoli, his classmate in high school in Milan in the 1950s, captured his spirit well in his memorial comic “Get to it!” This would probably be his response to our despondency. These memorial notes would not have been appreciated by him. Too much, for someone as shy as he was.

Let us briefly review some of the stages of his life. Born in the midst of World War II (1941), he came to anarchism after reading a communiqué in the weekly *Umanità Nova* hanging in the State University. He made contact with the Spanish anarchist movement engaged in the underground struggle against the Franco regime, and from there traveled to Spain.

Upon his return to Italy, news arrived that one of the anti-Francoists, Jorge Conill Valls, had been sentenced to death following some demonstrative attacks against symbolic places of the regime. In protest, Amedeo, along with other young anarchists and socialists, decided to kidnap Spanish Vice Consul Isu Elías. This was the first political kidnapping in Italy, and

the event had a certain echo in public opinion. The death penalty for Jorge was commuted to life imprisonment, and the vice consul was released.

On the day of the trial, 21-year-old Bertolo, until then a fugitive, gave himself up in court; the judge recognized the moral value of the motives behind the kidnappers’ act and ordered their sentences suspended, while outside, in Milan and Rome, demonstrations were held against Franco’s dictatorship. Shortly after, he edited the short-lived publication *Materialism and Freedom* in 1963. Three years later, he was among the organizers of the International

Youth Convention held in Milan, and hosted by, among others, Dutch Provos and French protesters. At the end of the convention, protestors improvised a demonstration where a garrote (the instrument of death used by the Franco regime) was carried on their shoulders in front of the Duomo, a significant Catholic cathedral, before the police arrived to make the usual arrests.

Through these events, ties with European protest youth were strengthened. These ties continued in the following years and helped to bring the spirit and practices of the French May to Italy. Amedeo



*Roberto and Amedeo, third and fourth from the left, with Eduardo Colombo, Mimmo Pucciarelli and Rosanna Ambrogetti during one of the joyous moments of the international anarchist meeting in Venice 1984, a break from the organizational efforts in which they played a fundamental role.*

organized the Gioventù Libertaria Group in Milan and then the Bandiera Nera Group, adherents of the Gruppi Giovanili Anarchici Federati (GGAF, later GAF). He founded, with Giuseppe Pinelli, the Cocenera (Black Cross) following the example of Stuart Christie's Anarchist Black Cross. Their objective was to bring active solidarity to militants who were victims of Francoist repression.

The opening of the Sacco e Vanzetti Circle in Viale Murillo (1966), then the Ponte Della Ghisolfia Circle (1968) in Piazza Lugano, then the Scaldasole Circle in the street of the same name in the Ticinese District (1969), then the Viale Monza Branch (1976), shared with the Federazione Anarchica Milanese, then the Elèuthera Branch in Via Rovetta 27 until the move (last year) to Via Jean Jaures. Amedeo did them all, moving between political and editorial offices.

The state massacre of December 12, 1969, changed the history of Italy, the lives of comrades, and the activities of the Black Cross, which responded to the events shifting focus to the necessary activity of defense and counter-information. Amedeo, upon learning of Pinelli's death, telephoned his comrades, "They killed Pino. Let's go to the police headquarters. To silence us, they will have to kill us all."

Thus began an intense season. Famous was the press conference at the Circolo Ponte Della Ghisolfia on December 17, 1969, in which

the Milanese youth stated in clear terms, "Valpreda is innocent, Pinelli was murdered, the massacre is state-sponsored." For the Corriere Della Sera these were "rantings," while the Questore of Milan immediately besmirched Pinelli's memory, accusing him of committing suicide to prove his guilt.

Amedeo, who was already working in depth on the bombings that had broken out in the preceding months up and down Italy, ascribing them to a plan hatched by the state to halt the momentum of the '68/'69 protests, was among those who clearly outlined the contours of the strategy of tension. The book *The Bombs of the Masters* (Popular Trial of the Italian State in the Persons of the Investigators for the Milan Massacre), and hundreds of thousands of newspapers and leaflets, were just a few of the remaining visible signs of the seasons in which the movement succeeded in turning the tables from the initial witch-hunt against the libertarians to the assertion of the truth: the anarchists are innocent, the massacre is state-sponsored, Pinelli was murdered, Calabresi is a murderer.

The editorship of *A-Rivista Anarchica* since 1971; the activity of the Federated Anarchist Groups (from its founding in 1972 until its self-disbandment in 1978) and that of the Libertarian Spain Committee; the conferences: on Bakunin; on the New Masters, in which a new class of rulers,

the technobureaucrats, is analyzed; on Self-Management, seen as a continuous practice of deconstructing power; international meetings such as the one in 1984 in Venice where some three thousand comrades from various parts of the world gathered; editorial work in the journal *Interrogations* founded in 1974 by Louis Mercier Vega, a former combatant in the Spanish Civil War with the Durruti Column; the creation of the Center for Libertarian Studies (1976) alongside the Pinelli Archives, a place where the rich material "inherited" from previous generations is organized thanks to the generous support of comrades like Pio Turroni; the reactivation of the publishing house Antistato, which played a great role in bringing authors to be rediscovered (Bakunin, Kropotkin, Malatesta, Landauer, Armand) to Italy, or who profoundly renewed the cultural horizon of the movement (Bookchin, Ward, Goodman, Castoriadis, Mercier Vega, Lourau, Clastres, Colombo, and others as well as the new series of the magazine *Volontà* since 1978); again, in 1986, the birth of the publishing house Elèuthera, heir to the Antistato. Amedeo had always been one of its



organizers and with its publications, it continues to provide new stimuli and open unforeseen paths for anarchism.

And that's just to focus on his work with the "big" projects, which were accompanied by an intense and constant activity of meetings, seminars, and various initiatives that, together with a truly extensive network, internationally, of personal relationships, made Scarlett and Amedeo a true hub of the "cultural politics" (can we call it that?) of a large part of anarchism, with dozens, hundreds of contacts, some of whom became "Elèuthera authors," featured in a growing catalog that now numbers around 250 published books.

Personally, I have had a special relationship with Amedeo. He was with Gianni (his brother), Antonella Frediani, Pino Pinelli, Umberto Del Grande, Enrico Maltini, Fausta Bizzozzero, Luciano Lanza, and a few others, among the first anarchists I met in early 1968, all older than me, and for that reason my "examples." But Amedeo. I experienced him in my early years of militancy as a father figure; I remember calling him "Daddy A.B." in some letters.

I also remember long chats, his clear reasoning and very determined action. Today, we remember him for his intellectual gifts, but in those 1960s and 1970s, the "sacred fire" of hard militancy was a common, ordinarily common, heritage, and Amedeo, for a combination of reasons, naturally





*Amedeo at the funeral of Pinelli*

exercised his own charisma. He was naturally a leader, but he lacked, fortunately, something to be fully one. He was not inclined to “lead.”

He was not a “continuationist,” (like yours truly) who once involved in an initiative, never gave it up (for a thousand reasons, even sensible ones). Amedeo was too curious. He liked dreaming, thinking, making new “things,” trying to forge them according to his own sensibility. Once he made a project, in many cases, he immediately thought of something else

And if the list of things he accomplished is long, so too would be the list of projects he thought

about, always organically. Item 1., then sub-items 1.1 and 1.2, 1.2; one does this, the other does that; general assembly every few; theoretical part, operational part. You start it. Funds can come from that. If not....

I do not know whether he or Scarlett retained the many ideas that ran through their heads, the many projects they worked on. In a world like the anarchist world, where a lot is always discussed about organization, but not always acted upon, Amedeo was reliable and dependable. If he embarked on a project, he put his all into it.

Little or nothing I have said, here, of his thinking. Of his writings, some of which, in my opinion, are fundamental for a modernization (let us say) of anarchism, or rather of our anarchism (including that of A) since there are various anarchisms in circulation.

There will be other, upcoming opportunities. Comrades and friends far more learned than I, than we, I know are preparing for the collection, edition, and reflection on his writings. Amedeo deserves it, the anarchist movement deserves it, of which, like almost all its exponents, Amedeo said every possible ill thing about, with that exacerbation of the soul that is characteristic of betrayed lovers.

It is within this theoretical and practical love of individual and collective freedom that I recognize in Amedeo an indispensable point of reference. Not a leader to be worshipped nor a thinker to be

conformed to. As an individual, he is gone, but he has left us a rich and up-to-date toolbox. It is up to us not to let it grow old and to keep it up to date.

Amedeo, bear Amedeo, your “Make due! Get to it!” I hear very well. And I’m not going to get pissed off, I’m not going to tell you off (you’re already there). Before you start beating up on me again because you don’t understand what that contributor on A has to do with it, why we give so much space to that issue, why we don’t interview that one, etc., let me give you a hug as, between your reserved nature and your illness that presented you as fragile, I think I haven’t done in a long time.

If we had a flag, we would lower it at your passing, at your departure. Not having one, we make do and get by, as much as possible, with this magazine that has you in its DNA; with your charisma (and your clear intelligence) I know you will continue to be there.

Burly and involved. Farewell Amedeo. A comrade just dropped by the newsroom. He told me about you as a “father” who influenced him and to whom he is grateful. I let him read this text. He told me “nice” and added that I should emphasize more your contemporary figure as a tireless militant, fine intellectual, and great organizer. “I never knew comrades who were all these three things together,” he told me.



# PAOLO FINZI



1951-2020

*Born in Milan in 1951 to a Jewish family who had struggled militantly against the fascist regime, Paolo was one of the central figures of the Milanese and Italian anarchist movement for more than half a century. In 1968, after meeting Giuseppe Pinelli, he joined the group Bandiera Nera, and began to participate in the anarchist circle Ponte della Ghisolfia and on December 12th, 1969 he was the youngest among those arrested following the bombing in Piazza Fontana in Milan.*

*His contributions to publishing and promoting the ideals of anarchism were tireless. In February 1971 he founded A-Rivista Anarchica. From that time on he worked as an editor and contributor on its 445 issues with his partner Aurora Failla. Over the years he has tirelessly organized and promoted hundreds of conferences on the many facets of anarchist thought and action, and also on subjects dear to him such as the poetics of De André and the culture and persecution of Roma and Sinti people.*

*A remembrance and farewell to Paolo from  
the Centro Libertari*

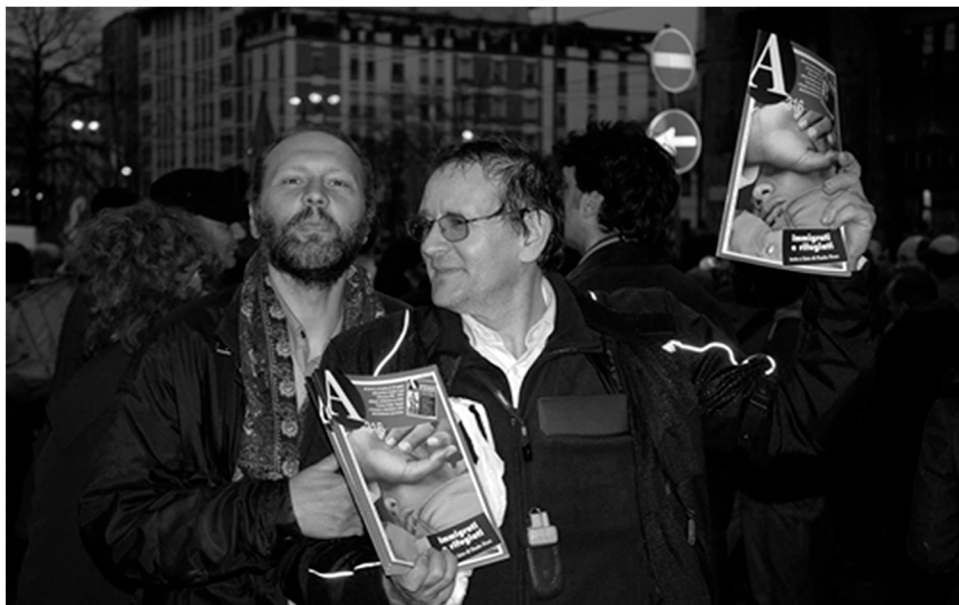
In his younger days, we knew him as Kasko (with a capital K). Back then we all had some sort of a nickname that we used with one another because we were a “gang” or, if you prefer, an affinity group. He was Kasko because he always wore a safety helmet at a time when the “Easy Rider” discourse shied away from such precautions. But unconventionality never impressed him much. For a number of years, he remained Kasko, throughout the period between the late 60s and the end of the 70s, a time of hardnosed activism, day after day, and activism as a way of life.

Like so many of his contemporaries, Paolo began his political career in 1968 at the Carducci High School in Milan, to be exact, where he earned his spurs as a “student leader” (as the jargon of the time had it). That very same year he grew close to the Ponte Della Ghisolfia (Anarchist) Circle – the ‘Anarchist’ in brackets was part of the original format – as is evident from a rare snapshot showing him in the front rows on the evening of the opening of the new premises at 31 Piazzale Lugano. The attraction persisted through that fateful year of 1969,

which saw him joining the Bandiera Nera (Black Flag) Group shortly after the Piazza Fontana bomb outrage and the death of Pino Pinelli, he virtually, as he put it himself, stepped into the vacancy left by Pinelli’s tragic and absolutely non-accidental death.

The eighteen-year-old Paolo’s choice of an activist lifestyle at a time of extraordinary social upheaval survived well beyond the “roaring” decade and through the historical ebbs and flows that were an accompaniment to his life and the life of the review up until 2020, the year they both ended. Obviously, activist practice has changed over time, but this “total” commitment survived and left an indelible mark on his life as well as on those of virtually all the members of the affinity group who shared those telling years and incidents, one at a time. It was a group that not only spearheaded the Bandiera Nera but also the GAF (Federated Anarchist Groups), which during those same years, alongside and in support of its active politics, launched a number of cultural and publishing ventures, beginning with the monthly review *A-Rivista Anarchica*, also referred to simply as *A*.

The first issue of *A* appeared in February 1971. In follow-up interviews, Paolo explained how this anarchist magazine, which was very innovative for its time, came about. Some things were obvious but at the same time, it was a group undertaking born out of a powerful activism that was directed



*In the photo, Paolo, in the guise of indefatigable propagandist for A magazine, is shown with longtime Centro Studi collaborator Gianfranco Aresi (1957-2016), during the demonstration to reposition the original commemorative plaque set by Milanese anarchists and democrats in memory of Pinelli in Piazza Fontana in 1977, which had just been removed by the Albertini's city administration in 2006.*

at the whole of society, something rather hard to imagine for those who did not live through those years.

Not that everything was splendid and forward-looking. Indeed, there were some aspects – even in “revolutionary” circles – that were absolutely unbearable, not just as a prospect for later, but in immediate terms.

The new review quickly proved to be a superb tool not just for exposing the criminal conspiracies of the powerful, but also for stigmatizing the authoritarian tendencies that were doing their damndest to snuff out the

libertarian spirit of '68. Nevertheless, the atmosphere of the times was reaching irrepressibly for innovation and creativity. It was precisely this keynote that prompted the new review – the very first to use the circled A as their symbol, to draw attention not just to the apparently infinite variety of movements, ideas, and experiments typical of the times, but also to the new codes of communication that were asserting themselves.

In this, *A* was consciously – but without acrimony, albeit with a touch of youthful presumption – breaking away from a brand of

anarchist publishing that, by then, seemed obsolete in terms of its form, tone, and priorities. The intention instead was to drag anarchism into an era that was asking brand new questions. There was much that needed saying and doing, dismantling and rebuilding, especially because the glorious tradition to which *A* was proudly heir no longer looked up to supplying suitable answers.

Initially, the review was based on the premises of the “Ponte” (as the Circle had come to be referred to), but as early as 1972, it relocated to No 27, Via Rovetta, into a spartan, three-room on the top floor of what had been a villa. That was to be its permanent address for the next forty-eight years. At the time, the Turro District was still a working-class area. Come lunchtime, the streets were filled with blue overalls heading for the cheap eateries (first and second course with side and a quart of wine for 600 lire) scattered between the factories. There was one just on the corner, the Trattoria della Torre, run by Gigi and Eugenia, and it quickly became significant in the history of *A*.

Those very plain rooms, reminiscent of a Bavarian tavern, actually became a sort of sub-office of the editorial team, so much so that a lot of the photos capturing the editorial teams and visiting guests were taken right there, in Gigi's and Eugenia's eatery, which many an evening stayed open just for us (and in a Milan that was still strongly popular and antifascist,

they often tipped us off when anybody from the Political Bureau at Police Headquarters was roaming the area to collect information about us and our activities).

Initially, *A* was thought of as a newspaper where there would be room primarily for the concrete activities – for “struggles”, to use the jargon of the day – that anarchists and libertarians were engaged in society.

As a result, the format was tailored to this outlook and took on the appearance of a “campaigning paper,” but heavily illustrated and carefully composed. The attention paid to graphics and illustrations, regarded as a means of communication rather than as merely aesthetic, was in fact one of the typical features of *A* and survived throughout its publishing life. A number of readjustments were made, not so much to the format (which switched from broadsheet to tabloid in 1974) as to the composition of the pages and the iconography.

All of these were skills – and this includes the trade of the journalist or correspondent – that were learned on the job. It goes without saying, therefore, that especially at the outset, there were mishaps and stylistic shortcomings and the odd blunder before the skill was mastered. Thanks in part to the odd bit of good advice from professional printers like Ferro Piludu and the Rome-based Gruppo Artigiano Ricerche Visive (Artisan Visual Research Group) or gifted photographers such as Roberto



Gimmi and Gianfranco Aresi who handled most of the review's covers. Over the decades, A built up its rich fund of iconography from which many of the photos it used were drawn.

Over time, there were also telling changes in the editorial team. Initially, there was an editorial line-up that was very like-minded and quite sizable; this was true of the early years of the review. Then, again from within the orbit of the GAF, there came other editorial/cultural ventures – such as Edizioni Antistato, the international review *Interrogations*, the in-depth review *Volontà*, or the Centro Studi Libertari/Archivio G. Pinelli – whereupon the initial collective gradually shifted to new ventures, while keeping up close connections to the “mother-ship.”

It was no accident that the Editrice A cooperative was launched in 1977, encompassing all the publishing ventures already up and running, and, later on, those launched subsequently, such as the Eleuthera publishing imprint (1986) and the quarterly *Libertaria* magazine (1999).

But while the founding group hived off to fresh pastures, other editorial teams were formed on the Via Rovetta premises. The photos taken over decades bear witness to this ongoing ebb and flow of male and female comrades who dedicated a portion, sometimes a substantial portion, of their lives to A. There were many of them, actually too many to list here, with one particular exception: Fausta

Bizzozzero, who was present for the launch issue and was editor-in-chief of A for many a long year (1976 to 2017).

Even during the “hot” years when the risk of imprisonment was high, it was she more often than anyone else who acted as the legal representative of an anarchist review that certainly refused to back down. Suffice it to say that the review never ever referred to any “sudden illness,” but proclaimed loudly and clearly that Giuseppe Pinelli had been murdered at Milan Police Headquarters.

Over time, though, as Paolo explained, the de facto collectives were whittled away, aged, and gradually, passed away. Yet for half a century, the review managed to appear, come what may, precisely because there was a stable, sound, trustworthy figure like Paolo (or rather, Paolo plus Aurora, who were virtually a double-act). While there is no question that A was the product of a colossal collective effort that involved thousands of people, it is equally the case that only the determination and tenacity of those two people made sure that its story lasted fifty years.

It was during this phase that Kasko swapped nicknames and became the “Bertoni of Editrice A.” He himself spoke of his admiration for that tough, Italo-Swiss anarchist publisher, Luigi Bertoni, who, for forty-seven years, brought out a bilingual title (*Il Risveglio/Le Réveil*), and this during a period marked by two world wars and the advent of totalitarianism.

Such dogged, imperturbable publishing drive fascinated Paolo, and half seriously, half in jest, he set himself the target of emulating it.

This is what earned him a fresh nickname coined affectionately, and with a smidgen of irony, by his federation comrades, with whom A worked closely down through the decades. The continual turn-over in terms of editors and contributors – who, remember, exercised the militant option of always working for the review free of charge, just as Paolo and Aurora did – inevitably ensured that A increasingly became an expression of Paolo and of his particular view of anarchism.

Not that the various editorial line-ups that have followed one after the other, sometimes for lengthy periods, sometimes only briefly, did not leave their marks, also. Quite the opposite. Leafing through the pages of A it is obvious how, over time, priorities and approaches have altered, closely mirroring the sensibilities and explicit

priorities of whoever was working with the review at the time. This capacity for diversification, in tune with the constant flow of history, explains the richness of the review. But there is no question that increasingly, Paolo was turning into the center of gravity, assuming the risk, of which he was only too well aware, of turning it into his own personal title.

Yet that never happened because the underlying notion of the review was as a forum, an open space accessible to those who shared a libertarian sensibility and had something to say. Paolo's management was actually “ecumenical,” affording a voice to all anarchist and libertarian currents, even the ones most far removed from his own outlook with, perhaps, the odd exception in the case of those stances that grated most against his own acute (sometimes overly acute!) non-violent sensibilities.

But as a rule, Paolo, gifted with a formidably eclectic and curious mind, made room inside the review for the widest range of experiences and for all sorts of folk: intellectuals alongside unlettered, documented anarchists and rebels without labels, comrades of long-standing who were sometimes disillusioned, and brash youngsters still convinced not only of the possibility but also of the inevitability of changing the world right here and now.

As the review, born out of a break with traditional structures, gradually turned into an “institution” itself





over the decades, the stance adopted by Paolo, with one foot inside and one outside the anarchist movement, never wavered. This allowed him to keep tabs, not just on everything that was going on within anarchist circles, but also on everything libertarian (in the broadest sense of the term) happening in society.

It was precisely this even-keeled stance and a wide-ranging focus that probably contributed to the longevity of *A*. Nevertheless, there is no question that Paolo Finzi was always a “movement man”: that was his intellectual and emotional home. The physical setting in which he spent much of his life was the premises at 27 Via Rovetta, those three rooms, mind-bogglingly swamped in paper and ideas.

That is where we remember him: Paolo sitting in front of the computer, looking at you askance whenever he was hearing anything unexpected. Paolo with ink-stained lips on account of his filthy habit of sucking furiously on biros and pens.

Paolo with his unfailing (or so it seemed to us) jocularly. Sometimes he was there on his own, partly because he would show up before daylight and on official holidays. Sometimes, though, he was in the company of an unstoppable flood of comrades and friends, acquaintances and collaborators, and folk who were brazenly not to his liking, but whom he always welcomed anyway. As a matter of principle, he gave

them all a hearing, and there is no other way of running an open review.

Our relationship with Paolo, which in terms of the older members of our collective, began with the launch of *A*, had been continual and intense, right up until his final days, in activities we carried out together on behalf of the “Pinelli: Una Storia,” research project. Besides, our Study Centre was launched in September 1976 by the very same group that had launched the review five years before, so Paolo was a founding member of our association.

It was no accident that in 1987, the Centro Studi/Archivio, together with Eleuthera editions and the review *Volonta* (already part of Editrice A) moved from the premises (these having become inadequate) at 255 Viale Monza to the premises at 27 Via Rovetta. We occupied the basement, and *A* the upper floor, of the same building. This was the origin of the Libertarian Arcore to which Paolo refers jokingly in the pages below. This relocation prompts us to mention his extreme generosity, which was not confined to review-related matters because the premises had been acquired by Paolo in order to house, free of charge, growing kindred ventures.

The place was to be our home for twenty-eight years. He was not one to favor a lot of talk about his generosity, so we shall make do with this quick mention and allow ourselves to add merely that it was extraordinary and hard to put a price on.

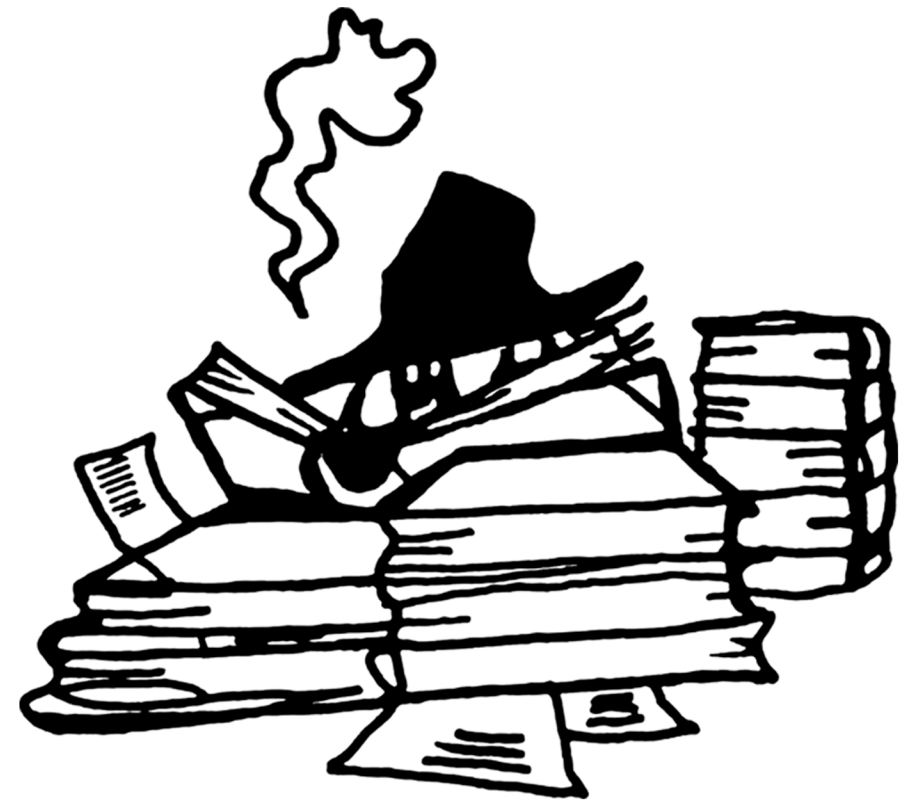
In his latter months, Paolo had changed. Suffering was etched on his face and his eyes had lost the irreverent, amused glint that had been a feature of his. The future, his own, *A*’s, and the world’s, scared him. Moreover, he was aging and his health was uncertain; over-commitment of his available resources seemed to explain so much if not everything.

His illness went deeper and maybe, despite his silence, we should have caught on to it, and yet we respect his extreme option. All we can do

now is to pass on the memory of a history that deserves to be told, and we do so wording it in a way that he himself would have done.

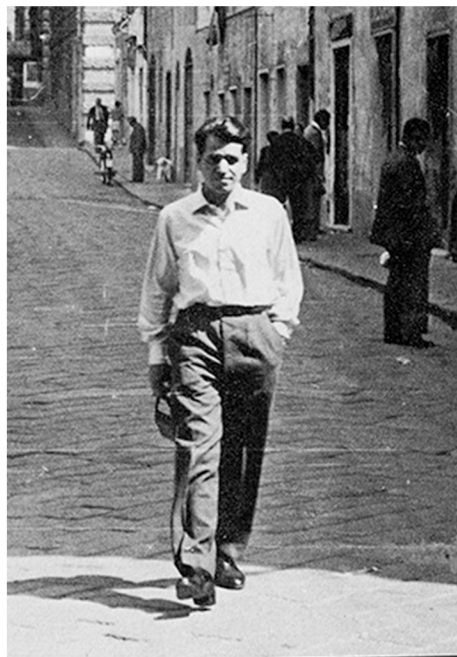
We begin with the words he wrote a month before he took his own life in a farewell letter that his daughter Alba retrieved from a waste-paper basket:

“An inquiring mind, I have spent pretty much a whole lifetime making anarchist propaganda and creating male and female anarchists, and then I go and eliminate one ... and not one of the worst of them.”



# GIUSEPPE PINELLI

## 1928-1969



*A short biography by Nick Heath  
hosted on libcom.*

Giuseppe Pinelli was born 21st October 1928 in the working class neighbourhood of Porta Ticinese in Milan. He worked from a young age as an errand boy, and then later as a warehouse worker. In 1944-45 as a teenager he operated as a courier for an anarchist partisan group operating in the Milan area. Despite having to work at an early age he managed to educate himself by reading hundreds of books.

Mario Mantovani had set up

the paper *Il Libertario*, organ of the Federazione Comunista Libertaria Lombarde in 1945 in Milan and managed to gather together some of the surviving old comrades. *Il Libertario* appeared at first as a weekly and then as a bimonthly up to 1961. Giuseppe was one of a handful of young people who gravitated towards the grouping.

In 1954 Giuseppe got employment on the railways as a fitter. The following year he married Licia Rognini, who he had met on an Esperanto evening course.

The 1960s saw the steady growth of the Milanese anarchist movement, which accelerated after 1968. This was in no small way due to Giuseppe who organised young anarchists in the Gioventù Libertaria (Libertarian Youth) in 1963. Two years later he was one of those who founded the Sacco and Vanzetti Circle who found themselves a local centre which remained open for the next decade.

In 1968 with the end of that circle he founded the Ponte della Ghisolfia Circle (named after the nearby bridge) on 1st May. The group organised a series of conferences and student meetings and assemblies. The circle

and Pino were also involved in some of the first initiatives around the base union CUB. Pino also worked for the reconstruction of the anarcho-syndicalist union USI.

He organised the library of the circle making sure the hundreds of books were all bound in black, classified and arranged. On Sundays the circle's centre welcomed the older comrades, some aged 90 and some even older!

On 25th April 1969 fascists initiated a series of bomb attacks as part of the Strategy of Tension which involved the manipulation of the Italian secret services working together with the American CIA. Some Milanese anarchists were arrested for this as part of a scheme to discredit the revolutionary movement. One of them, Braschi, was invited by the police commissioner Calabresi to jump from the window of the police station.

Pino organised support for the imprisoned anarchists (who were finally acquitted in June 1971). He brought food parcels, clothing and books to the prison gates. At the same time he began to organise the Crocenera Anarchica (Anarchist Black Cross) as a prisoner support and counterinformation network.

Pino had attracted the attention of the police and in the aftermath of the December 1969 bombings (see Pietro Valpreda) he was arrested and taken to the central police station to be interrogated by Calabresi and his henchmen. On the evening of 15th December he "fell" from the

fourth floor of the police station.

The state murder of Pinelli set off a wave of protest. Threethousand people attended his funeral. Later Dario Fo wrote his play *Accidental Death of An Anarchist* about Pinelli's murder and the framing of Valpreda.

Calabresi was himself mysteriously gunned down in the street a few years later. Sometime later, Licia, worried about the attention given to her husband's grave, arranged to have his body reburied in the "anarchist" corner of the cemetery in Carrara, where he lies alongside Goliardo Fiaschi and Gino Lucetti.

*For extensive documentation on  
the life and legacy of Pinelli see  
"Giuseppe Pinelli: A Story of Ours  
and Ours Alone" hosted at [http://  
omeka.bida.im/s/pinelli/page/home](http://omeka.bida.im/s/pinelli/page/home)*

# PIETRO VALPREDÀ



*A short biography by Nick Heath  
hosted on libcom.*

## 1933-2002

Valpreda and others published the duplicated magazine *Terra e libertà* which sang the praises of propaganda by deed anarchist Ravachol.

The anarchist group of Ponte della Ghisolfà in Milan distanced themselves from him as did the Italian Anarchist Federation (FAI) in Rome who regarded the March 22nd group as hotheads.

In this period of the counter-insurgency Strategy of Tension the police were able to infiltrate the police agent Salvatore Ippolito into the groupuscule, which was also infiltrated by neo-Nazis like Mario Merlino.

On the 12th December 1969 Valpreda was visiting his aunt. On that day a bomb exploded in the Piazza Fontana at the Agricultural Bank, killing 16 and wounding 88. Three other bombs exploded in Rome at the same time wounding 14.

On the 15th, Valpreda, appearing in court for insulting the Pope, was arrested for these explosions. On the same night, the anarchist railway worker Giuseppe Pinelli, was also arrested for these bombings and “fell” from the 4th floor of the Milan police station.

The Italian press had a field day

describing the totally innocent Valpreda as a monster. The Milanese anarchist movement courageously responded by holding a press conference the following day and proclaiming his innocence. This set off a vast campaign in Italy and internationally to fight for his release. There were thousands of actions and a counter-information campaign that was both effective and widespread. Valpreda became a symbol, like Sacco and Vanzetti had many years before.

In 1972 Valpreda was released from prison. For a long time, the false accusations and imprisonment had a devastating effect on his life. Then he met Lauretta, and they had a son, Tupac. The hearings dragged on, at Rome, then Catanzaro and then Rome again. Pietro received the strong support of a new partner, Pia. Then in 1979 Pietro was cleared by a court and took part in hundreds of conferences, public debates and television interviews.

Imprisonment had aggravated the Buerger's disease that he suffered from, and he was no longer able to continue his career as a dancer. For a while he was a bookseller and then opened the Barricata café in the working class neighbourhood of Garibaldi in Milan. He continued to circulate in the anarchist movement, to attend demonstrations - above all that on every 15th December organised by the Ponte della Ghisolfà Anarchist Circle to remember the murder of Pinelli.

In his last years he wrote 4 novels;

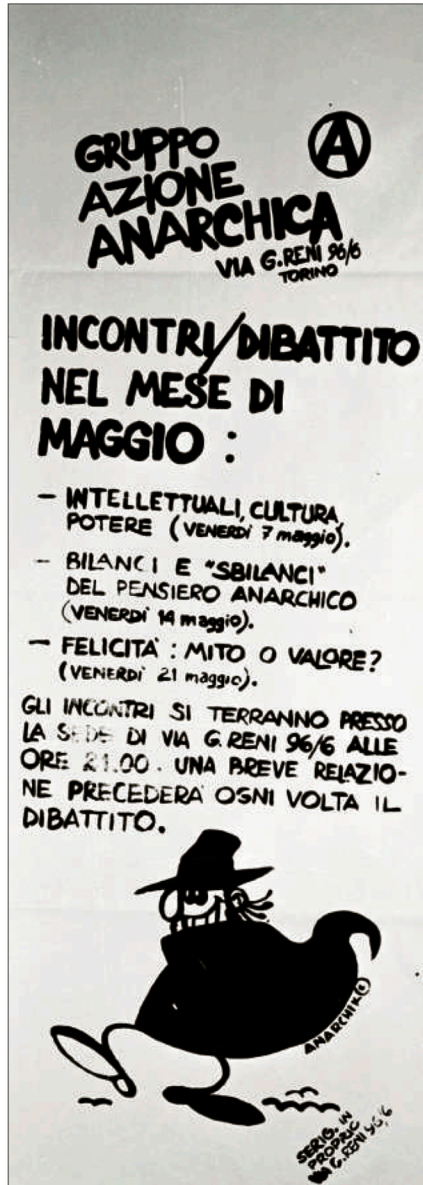
earlier he had written a book of poetry at the time of his detention. The first, *Tri di a Luvii*, was published by the Ponte della Ghisolfà group. The other 3, co-written with Pietro Colaprico were brought out by Tropea Editions. His health began to deteriorate and he died after long illness of cancer on 6th July 2002.

Pietro's funeral was organised by the Ponte della Ghisolfà group which on 8th July set off from the anarchist local followed by 3,000 people flying anarchist flags. Classical music and jazz were played at Pietro's request as well as anarchist songs before his body was cremated.

Pietro refused to be a passive victim of State repression and throughout his long ordeal he discovered within himself reserves of strength which gave him a proud and dignified appearance and comportment. His affirmation of what it is to be an authentic human being is in stark contrast to the squalid machinations of the Italian State and its secret services.



# HERE ARE THE



## Gruppi Anarchici Federati

The Gruppi Anarchici Federati (GAF) along with the FAI and GIA were the three major organizations that made up the Italian-speaking anarchist movement in the 1960s and 1970s. GAF was born at the end of 1969 from the ashes of the pre-existing Federated Anarchist Youth Groups (GGAF) as the participants aged.

Their main objective was to rethink anarchism and enable it to be considered as an ethics, a science, and a project for revolution, more responsive to the contemporary social and political arena compared to its expression in the previous decades.

The need for a libertarian voice in the discussion of contemporary thought, as well as the development of anti-authoritarian social struggles, were at the forefront of the GAF's project to recover the terrain anarchism had lost to the prevailing Marxist attitudes, and to become not only a coherent critic of domination but also a valid alternative. They used a pluralistic structure based on affinity as an organizational model. This model established an aggregation of groups sharing the same political vision with the freedom to act autonomously within a framework of existing agreements with no set

# ANARCHISTS

"head." GAF militants decided to dissolve the federation in January 1978.

## Gioventù Libertaria Group and Ponte Ghisolfi

In 1961, in the Lombard capital, Milan, Amedeo Bertolo and other young anarchists, together with Eliane Vincileoni and Giovanni Corradini, established the Gruppo Giovanile Libertario (Libertarian Youth Group), which subsequently became known as Gioventù Libertaria

(Libertarian Youth). Soon after, Bertolo and others, among them Aimone Fornaciari, Luigi Gerli, and Gianfranco Pedron, all in their early twenties, rose to prominence in the news reports for their kidnapping (bloodshed-free) of the Spanish Vice Consul Isu Elías. In a short time, they accomplished their objective of raising awareness of the merciless repression and execution by Franco's regime of three militants, members of the Federación Ibérica de Juventudes

**GLI ANARCHICI**  
A PROPOSITO DELLE BOMBE DEL 25 APRILE (FIERA E STAZ. CENTRALE)  
DICHIARANO CHE I RESPONSABILI DEI DUE VILI ATTENTATI NON SONO MAI STATI CERCATI. NEL FRATTEMPO I COMPAGNI ANARCHICI CORRADINI, VINCILEONI, BRASCHI, FACCIOLO - ASSOLUTAMENTE ESTRANEI NEL FATTO E NELLO SPIRITO A QUESTI ATTENTATI - SONO DA TRE MESI IN CARCERE SENZA CHE LA POLIZIA SIA RIUSCITA A PROVARE LE SUE ASSURDE ACCUSE.

**GLI ANARCHICI**  
RAMMENTANO CHE CON GLI ARRESTI POLITICI E LE DETENZIONI ILLEGALI HANNO ORIGINE I REGIMI AUTORITARI E DI POLIZIA.

**GLI ANARCHICI**  
ESIGONO CHE I COMPAGNI SIANO IMMEDIATAMENTE PROCESSATI E LIBERATI.

21 VII 69  
SIMPATO A CUR  
ASSEMBLEA STRAORDINARIA DEGLI ANARCHICI DI MILANO DELLA CROCE NERA ANARCHICA

In tutti i Paesi «occidentali» lo stato, organizzazione del potere economico e politico, si va trasformando in senso autoritario. In questo processo di rafforzamento (che non assume necessariamente forme fasciste ed anzi più spesso si esplica in forme socialdemocratiche) lo stato ricorre al quanto di velluto delle riforme per imbrigliare le masse proletarie ed al pugno di ferro della repressione contro le minoranze rivoluzionarie.

Sempre più spesso contro queste minoranze lo stato ricorre all'esercizio della violenza scoperta e brutale, alla provocazione, alla calunnia, all'eliminazione fisica e al linciaggio morale. In Italia come in Germania e in Inghilterra lo stato segue gli stessi modelli di provocazione-repressione, colpendo di preferenza gli anarchici, suoi nemici irriducibili, e fra gli anarchici i compagni della CROCE NERA, organizzazione di solidarietà internazionale rivoluzionaria.

**Contro la repressione internazionale solidarietà internazionale rivoluzionaria**

**GIUSEPPE PINELLI**  
della Croce nera anarchica italiana  
arrestato a Milano il 15 dicembre 1969  
per cospirazione (pena prevista 20 anni)

**STUART CHRISTIE**  
della Croce nera anarchica inglese  
arrestato a Londra il 30 agosto 1971  
per cospirazione (pena prevista 20 anni)

**GEORG VON RAUCH**  
della Croce nera anarchica tedesca  
arrestato a Berlino il 4 dicembre 1971  
per cospirazione (pena prevista 20 anni)

**PIETRO VALPREDÀ**  
della Croce nera anarchica italiana  
arrestato a Milano il 15 dicembre 1969  
per cospirazione (pena prevista 20 anni)

**CROCE NERA ANARCHICA**  
P.L. LUIGIO DI MILANO  
arrestato a Milano il 15 dicembre 1969  
per cospirazione (pena prevista 20 anni)





Libertarias (FIJL). Their trial was held in Varese in November 1962 and rapidly turned into a denunciation of the regime, to the extent that those involved were given a light sentence and soon, were free again.

After having spent a few years on the premises of the Circolo Sacco and Vanzetti in Viale Murillo, in 1967 they moved to a new space in Piazzale Lugano in the working-class neighborhood of Bovisa, which became their and other anarchists' new headquarters. Among these were a few elderly militants that Bertolo recalled seeing immersed in Sunday readings of the anarchist press and reminiscing over old times. This new space, inaugurated on May 1, 1968, took the name of the nearby Ghisolfa bridge (Ponte Della Ghisolfa), "so as not to give it the name of one of our saints or martyrs." Pinelli, who was the youngest of the senior group and, subsequently, the oldest in the junior group, was among the main protagonists of this phase, together with Bertolo, Fausta Bizzozzero, Umberto Del Grande, Luciano Lanza,

Cesare Vurchio, Paolo Fenzi, and other militants active in "Bandiera Nera."

### CroceNera

Crocenera took the name and strategy of the Anarchist Black Cross, which had recently been reestablished in London by the Englishman Stuart Christie, which in turn had taken its name from an organization supporting persecuted Russian anarchists active at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the first issue of their bulletin, they stated, "The aim of the Crocenera is to constitute a network of organizations of revolutionary self-defense and international solidarity."

Through that, it distinguished itself from the National Committee for Political Victims (CNPVP), which only provided material assistance to incarcerated anarchists.

While the CNPVP had a national character, the Crocenera was at the same time local and international, with a diversification of activities - counter-information internal and external to the anarchist movement - and possessed a

greater dynamism and timeliness.

Their initial focus was on supporting the imprisoned and struggling Spanish anarchists, but quickly their activity was subsumed with responding to repression in Italy, not only with sending money to those arrested, but also, above all, with the organization of various types of demonstrations to raise public awareness and to provide a prompt and precise response to the slander spread by the police and their spokespersons.

The publication of their internal bulletin (of which nine issues were published) periodically reported news about police and government repression and about the activities of the anarchist Crocenera itself.

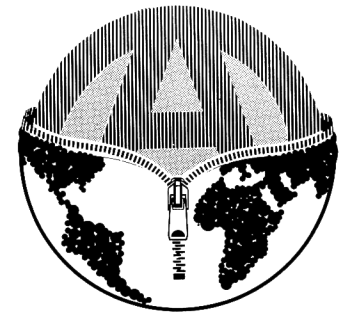
The specific work of the Crocenera proved particularly useful after the attacks in Milan and Rome on December 12, 1969. The bulletin of the Crocenera dissolved and its organizers began to produce *A-Rivista*.

### Centro Studi Libertari

The Centro Studi Libertari / Archivio Giuseppe Pinelli was founded in 1976 with a two-fold purpose: on one hand, the establishment of a historical archive for the preservation of anarchist memory, and on the other, the rethinking of anarchism in the light of the social context in which it operates with the aim of bringing it to the forefront as an alternative point of reference to the dominant culture.

The choice of its founders to dedicate their archive to the memory

of Giuseppe Pinelli was no accident. Pino was a militant in the Milanese Group Bandiera Nera in the 1960s. It was precisely his comrades, now the Ponte Della Ghisolfa Group, who founded the Centro Studi Libertari/ Archivio Giuseppe Pinelli, starting with a modest collection of documents and texts that Pino himself took care of.

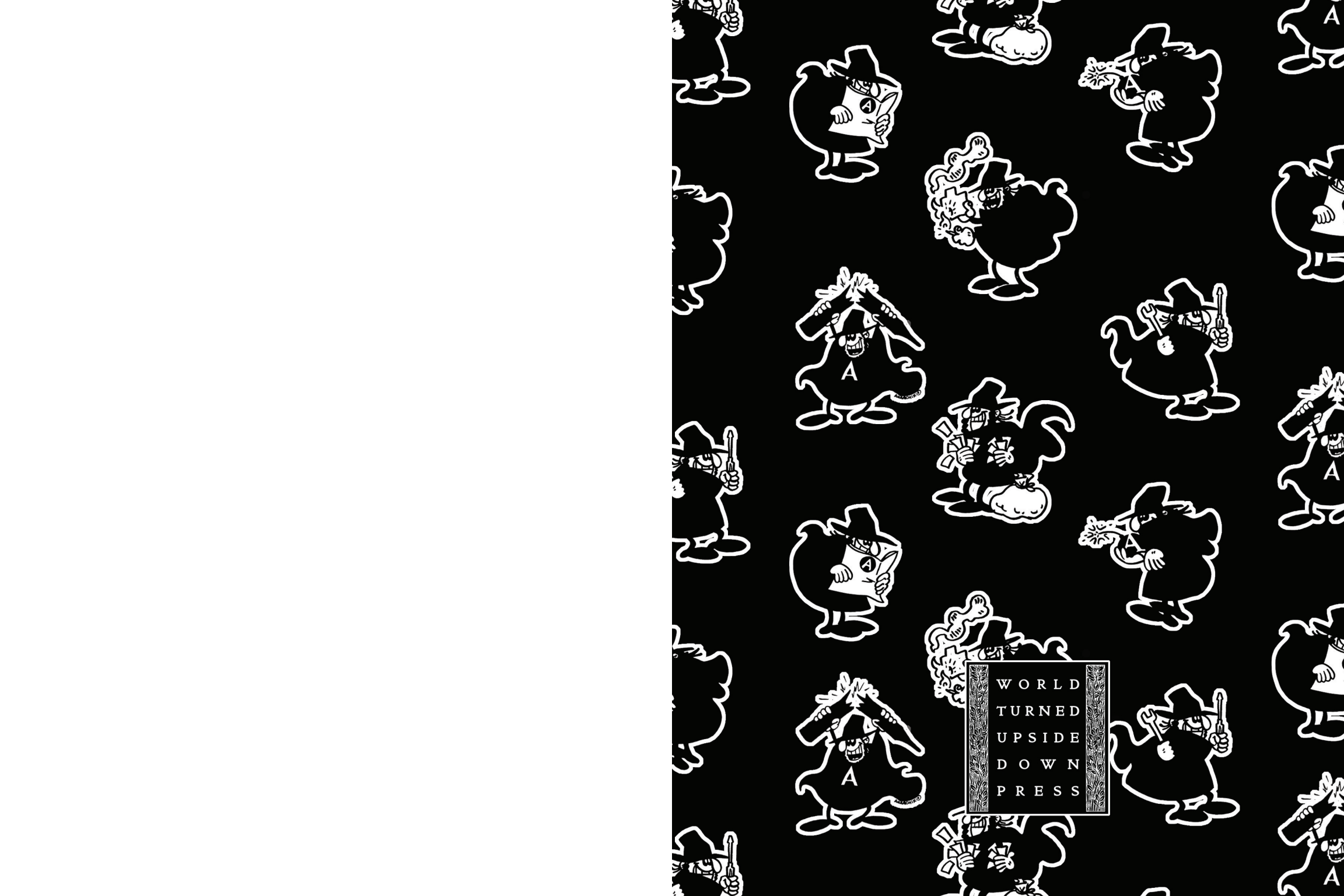


With deep and endearing thanks to Roberto Ambrosoli,  
Amedeo Bertolo, Paoli Finzi, and all those other unnamed  
friends who brought the Anarchik into the world for us

May a thousand new Anarchik's bloom through many new and  
irreverant cartoons we make of us very strange people







WORLD  
TURNED  
UPSIDE  
DOWN  
PRESS



The Anarchik first appeared in 1967, a twist on the old caricature of a mad anarchist bomber. Within a few years, the little man with an irreverent grin was starring in a comic strip in the pages of one of Italy's longest running anarchist publications. Created by Roberto Ambrosoli (with the help of friends like Amedeo Bertolo), his impact spread internationally, producing any number of likenesses, but few translations.

This small book attempts to preserve and share much of Ambrosoli's illustrated work while also clarifying the context of his friends' struggles to an English language audience

